July 23, 1990

THE NEW YORKER

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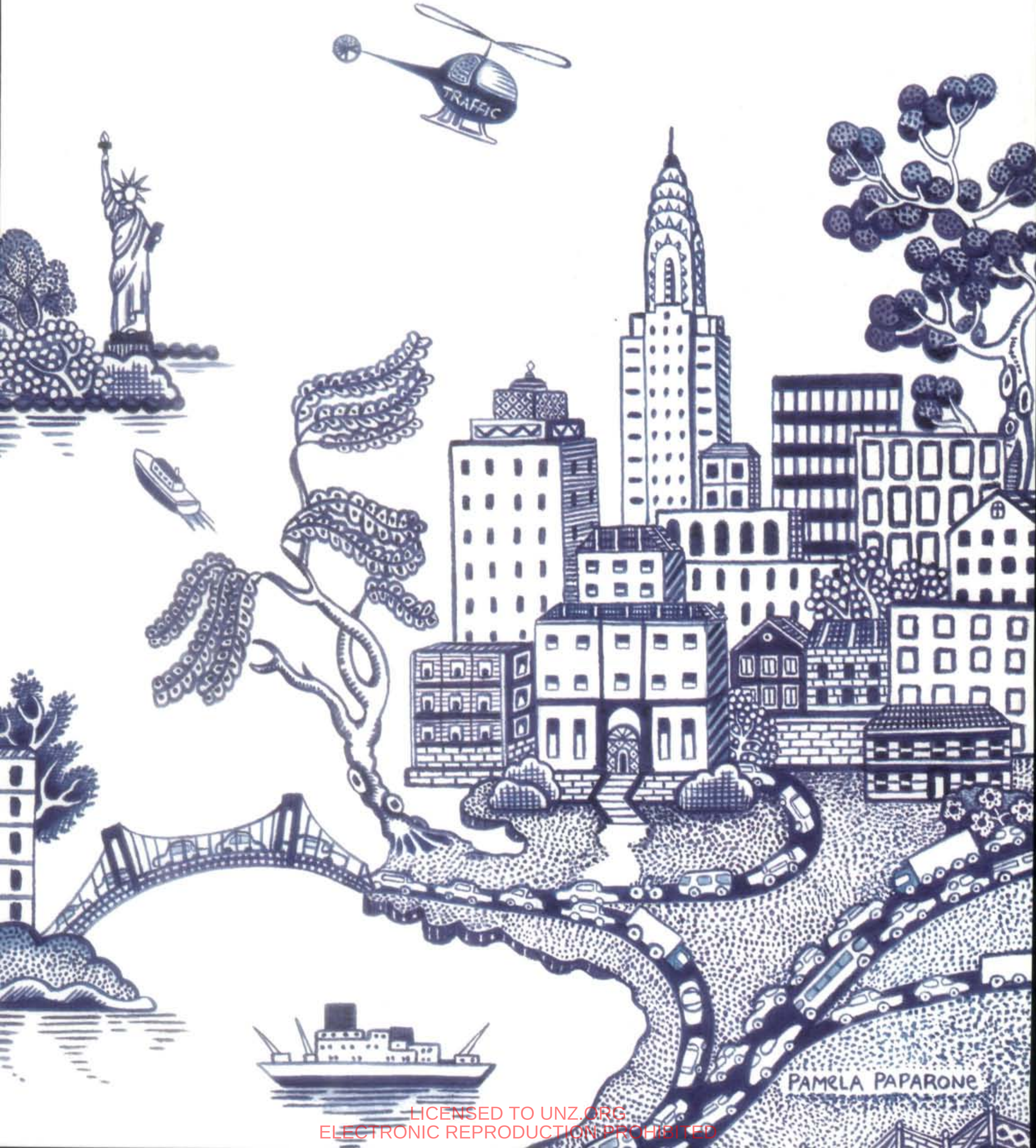
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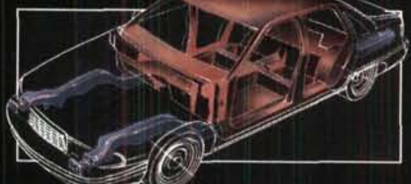

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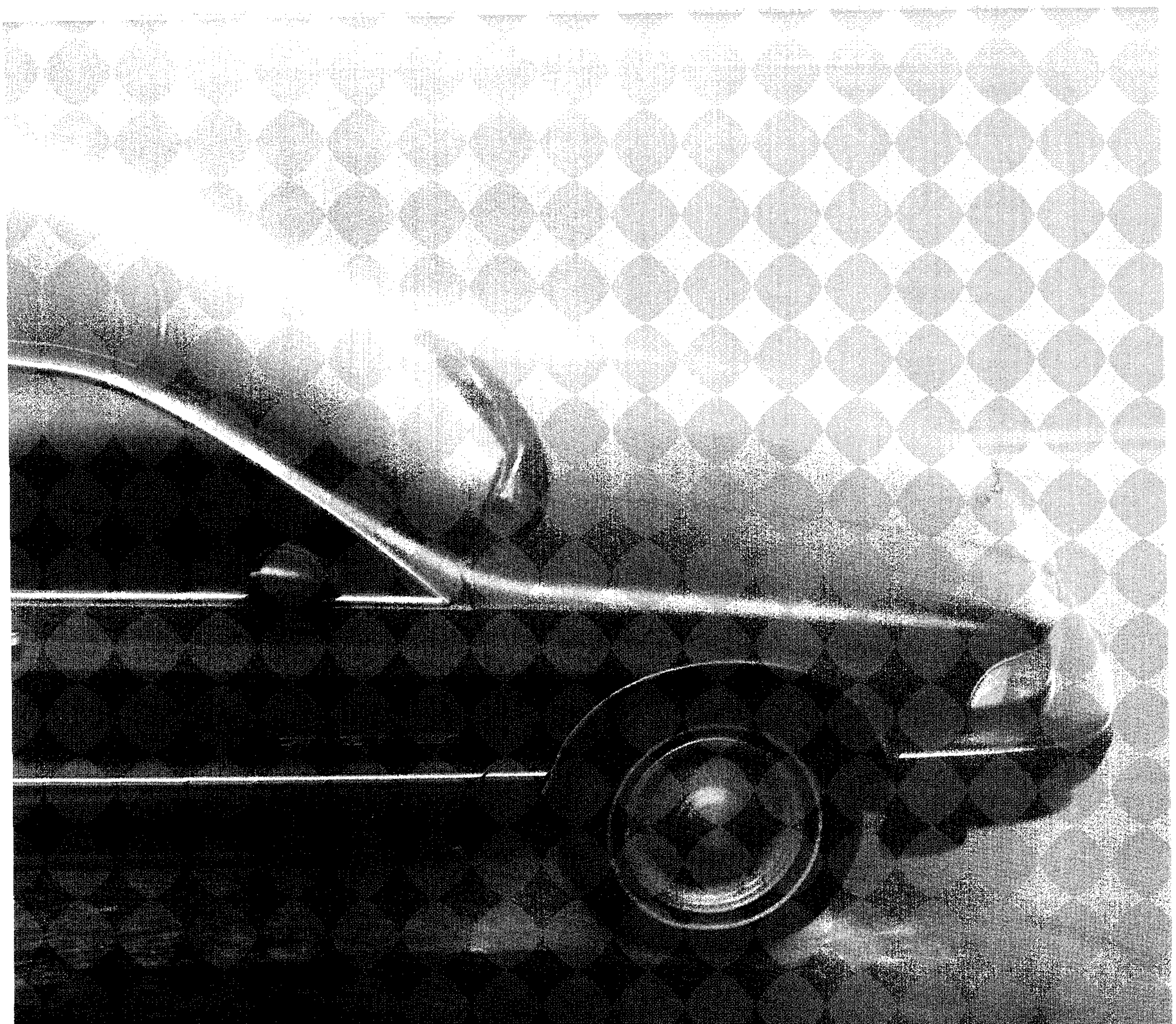

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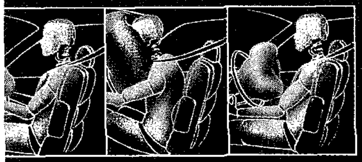

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

WHAT a very great pity it is that way back last fall, when Sir Peter Hall's production of "The Merchant of Venice" came to Broadway, no one at WNET thought to broadcast the fourth program in "Playing Shakespeare," the wonderful television series that John Barton and members of the Royal Shakespeare Company made for London Weekend Television in 1982. The grand old man of Elizabethan-verse speaking, Barton was one of the people who, along with Hall, invented the approach to Shakespearean acting and directing that New York audiences are witnessing when productions like "The Merchant of Venice" are mounted here; and the fourth program, in which Barton discusses the character of Shylock with two actors whom he has directed in the role, would have provided theatregoers with an interesting frame of reference.

We think it's a pity in general that WNET never broadcasts the series. The book Barton wrote as a companion piece to the series has long been available in this country (it's published by Methuen); but it isn't much use, really, without the programs themselves. The whole point is to see the technique in action and note what happens when actors approach the same speeches or scenes in different ways. There are nine programs, each devoted to a different problem or topic: how to deal with irony or ambiguity; how to "marry" the traditions of modern acting and Elizabethan speech; how to find a balance between heightened and naturalistic language or between "passion" and "coolness." The actors talk a bit, then they act a bit, then they talk some more. The book provides a fairly accurate record of what everyone says; but unless you can see the difference between Patrick Stewart's rendition of the trial scene in "Merchant," say, and David Suchet's, the book remains a cipher.

Good news is that the Museum of Broadcasting (1 East 53rd Street) has a copy of "Using the Verse," the second program in the series. Just now, the museum is having a retrospective of programs made by the series' producer, Reiner Moritz, who has given us so much first-rate arts programming, like the National Theatre "Mysteries" and "Oresteia," which we'd also like to see broadcast. (They're not in the museum's collection.) Moritz's programs are worth going out of one's way for, but they're best viewed on television, not in a screening room. They were made with the idea of bringing great performances into the living room, so that they become a part of the context of daily life.

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25			

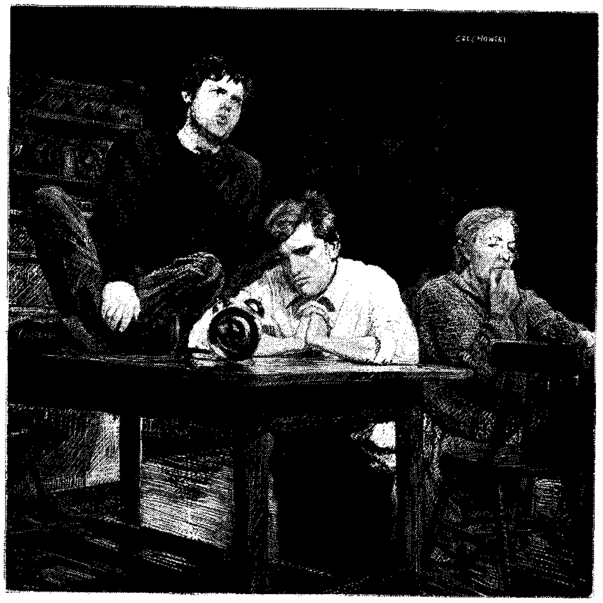
OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

The English Only Restaurant—A musical farce by Silvio Martínez Palau, Sergio García-Marruz, and Saul Spangenberg. Preview on July 18. Opens July 19 at 8 and runs through July 29. (Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 354-1293.)

NEW THIS SEASON

Aspects of Love—Andrew Lloyd Webber's latest extravaganza, based on David Garnett's frail 1955 novel of the same title, aspires to good taste and sophistication (it's about artists and theatre folk rather than cats or trains) but ends up being a sort of monument to vulgarity. The combination of Garnett's triviality and Lloyd Webber's pretentiousness produces something so empty it implodes. (Reviewed in our issue of 4/23/90.) (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)



Ciaran O'Reilly, Patrick Fitzgerald, and Pauline Flanagan in "Philadelphia, Here I Come!"

By and for Havel—A pair of one-acters in revival. "By"—**AUDIENCE**—is based on an episode that occurred when Václav Havel had a menial job in a brewery; "for"—**CATASTROPHE**—is Samuel Beckett's poetic tribute to Havel when he was in prison. Together, they make an evening that is both comic and stirring. With Kevin O'Connor and Lou Brockway. (3/19/90) (John Houseman Studio Theatre, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038.)

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof—As Maggie the Cat, Kathleen Turner seems in desperate straits in this limp and hapless revival of Tennessee Williams' most playable family melodrama. (4/2/90) (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 246-0220. Closes Aug. 1.)

City of Angels—Larry Gelbart, dramatist; Cy Coleman, composer; Billy Byers, arranger; James Naughton and Gregg Edelman, leading men; and Michael Blakemore, director, are all in top form in this sharp, jokey musical satire about Hollywood in the forties. The plot concerns the making of a private-eye movie (and the unmaking of its author). The spectacular settings and costumes were designed by Robin Wagner and Florence Klotz and lighted by Paul Gallo. (12/25/89) (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 246-0102.)

Falsettoland—This latest installment of a three-part cantata by William Finn (music and lyrics) is a sequel to "In Trousers" and "March of the Falsettos." Mr. Finn's story presents a number of new elements (among them a bar mitzvah in the hospital room of a man who is dying of AIDS) before dissolving in its own syrup. The music sounds agreeable enough, and the performance goes smoothly, under the direction of James Lapine; Chip Zien is very good as a benign psychiatrist. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

A Few Good Men—"Mister Roberts" meets "The Mary Tyler Moore Show." Aaron Sorkin's military-courtroom drama treats issues such as justice, honor, loyalty, and morality with the slick, facile smugness of a half-hour comedy series, but the performances, by an ace cast under Don Scardino's direction, are wonderful. (11/27/89) (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Forever Plaid—Stuart Ross's loving, tongue-in-cheek salute to the "guy groups" of the fifties is a real treat. The performances of Jason Graae, Stan Chandler, David Engel, and Guy Stroman (as the Plaids, a close-harmony group snuffed out in the prime of life and brought back to earth for a single evening) are so deadpan, and the songs (arranged by James Raitt, who also accompanies on piano) are rendered at such a heightened pitch of musical good faith, that only from Ross's script and choreography would you know the thing is a parody. Bring your mom. Hell, bring the whole family. (Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400.)

Further Mo'—This lively, touching, and brilliantly performed small-scale musical, set in a New Orleans vaudeville theatre in 1927, is a real gem. Written by Vernel Bagneris (who also stars), it uses blues singing (mostly quite recherché selections) to say something about the plight of the black entertainer in American history and culture. (Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. 475-5120.)

Grand Hotel—The dazzling imagination of Tommy Tune's direction and choreography and the dazzling scenery by Tony Walton almost make up for the inner vacancy of this show (except for a glorious, eccentric dance by Michael Jeter), but not quite. The story and characters are skimpy and the music is undistinguished. Nevertheless, there isn't a boring moment. (11/27/89) (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 246-0102.)

The Grapes of Wrath—This stage adaptation (by Frank Galati, who also directed) is the most truly adult version of Steinbeck's novel to date. It appeals to the mind rather than to the emotions; all the same, there's a cumulative effect. Don't go expecting to see John Ford or "Balm in Gilead," but expect to leave feeling as if you had. With Lois Smith and Gary Sinise. (4/2/90) (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Gypsy—This revival of the great Sondheim-Styne-Laurents-Robbins musical (directed by Arthur Laurents himself) is so delightful—and the cast (led by Tyne Daly, Crista Moore, and Jonathan Hadary), so engaging—that we think anyone would be happier for having seen it. One suggestion: don't applaud when Mama Rose comes down the aisle (you'll drown out the first number). Trust Broadway; you'll have ample time to welcome Miss Daly when she mounts the steps and delivers her first onstage line. (12/4/89) (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 246-0102.)

Jersey City—A play by Wendy Hammond, directed by Risa Bramon. With Alison Bartlett and Eddie Castrodad. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103. Closes July 21.)

Lettice & Lovage—The marvellous Maggie Smith plays Lettice Douffet, a freewheeling guide to England's stately homes, and the elegant Margaret Tyzack plays a reprimanding envoy sent by Lettice's employers in Peter Shaffer's merry comedy about an unlikely friendship and other matters. Paxton Whitehead and Bette Henritze are effective in supporting roles. Michael Blakemore was the director. (4/9/90) (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

Philadelphia, Here I Come!—Brian Friel's wonderfully funny and touching play about a young man from a small Irish village on the eve of his departure for America really holds

THE THEATRE—Cont'd

up in Paul Weidner's beautiful production. Grab this one: revivals this good don't come around often. (South Street Theatre, 424 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

The Piano Lesson—August Wilson's new drama, the fourth in his series chronicling the black-American experience in the twentieth century, is set in Pittsburgh in 1936. In its exquisite writing and over-all structure (involving the conflict over a piano that figures hauntingly and intricately in one family's history) the play resembles "Joe Turner's Come and Gone" more than "Fences." Wilson takes refuge in an overly mystical and melodramatic ending, but there are some great scenes—even if the subtle ensemble acting in Lloyd Richards' production is thrown out of balance by an excessive performance by Charles S. Dutton. (4/30/90) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 582-4022.)

Prelude to a Kiss—Craig Lucas's entertaining romantic comedy slips into fantasy when an old man kisses a bride at her wedding. Barnard Hughes is the old man, Mary-Louise Parker is the bride, and Timothy Hutton is the groom. (3/26/90) (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 944-9450.)

The Rothschilds—The 1970 musical by Jerry Bock (score), Sheldon Harnick (lyrics), and Sherman Yellen (book), with a cast led by Mike Burstyn. (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 254-6330.)

Six Degrees of Separation—You're best off knowing nothing about the new John Guare play, other than that it represents a perfect meeting of the playwright, director Jerry Zaks, and actress Stockard Channing. Out of a true story—one apparently about celebrity and Good Samaritanism—Guare has fashioned a wistful comedy about race, class, money, imagination, collective conscience, individual psyche, and the impulse toward art. What more do you want? (6/25/90) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Smoke on the Mountain—This loving satire of old-time gospel music, set in 1938, is perfectly delightful. Written by Connie Ray (who also performs, along with six other versatile actor-musicians), it recreates a Saturday-night service at a small church in rural North Carolina, where a family of more or less devout gospel singers have been invited to appear. (Lambs Theatre, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780. Closes July 29.)

Spunk—George C. Wolfe has adapted three short stories by Zora Neale Hurston, set in Harlem and the South, to make a gorgeous jazz-and-blues entertainment, giving them a powerful injection of his own mordant humor. Chic Street Man, singer and guitarist, wrote the dynamic score. With Ann Duquesnay (singer), and Victor Mack, Reggie Montgomery, Kevin Jackson, and Danitra Vance (actors). Mr. Wolfe directed. (5/7/90) (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

The Taming of the Shrew—The first of two plays in the New York Shakespeare Festival's free summer series in the Park. Tracey Ullman and Morgan Freeman head the cast. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Delacorte Theatre, Central Park near W. 81st St. Closes July 22. For information about tickets, which are required, call 861-7277.)

Tru—Robert Morse gives a deeply thought-out, accomplished performance as Truman Capote—by turns funny, bitchy, ironic, and rueful—at the end of his life and his tether. The play was written and directed by Jay Presson Allen. (1/1/90) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

LONG RUNS

BLACK AND BLUE: An evening of classic blues and jazz, conceived, designed, and directed by Claudio Segovia and Héctor Orezzoli, who created "Tango Argentino" in a similarly commemorative but far less visually opulent style. Musicians of renown have been assembled, and while LaVern Baker, Linda Hopkins, and Carrie Smith sing, a troupe of hoofers young and old give the tap-dance subculture a workout. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 246-0102.) . . . **CATS:** Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.) . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** The longest-running long run recently celebrated its thirtieth birthday. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.) . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY 1990:** A source of continual merriment, this revue is a cluster of parodies of shows along the Great White Way. Gerard Alessandrini conceived and directed it, and wrote the witty, barbed lyrics. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.) . . . **THE HEIDI CHRONICLES:** Wendy Wasserstein's play looks at first glance like standard baby-boom playwriting fare, but some alchemical combination of graceful-mindedness and good writing enables her to capture, lampoon, and transcend her generation all at the same time. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **JEROME ROBBINS' BROADWAY:** A collection of high spots from "On the Town," "Billion Dollar Baby," "High Button Shoes," "The King and I," "Peter Pan," "West Side Story," "Gypsy," "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum," and "Fiddler on the Roof," all of which were choreographed or directed, or both, by Jerome Robbins. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.) . . . **NUNSENSE:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.) . . . **OTHER PEOPLE'S MONEY:** Jerry Sterner's comedy about a New York corporate raider's attempt to take over a decorous New England business maintains its suspense from beginning to end. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.) . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** The much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets, everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

DANCE

During its "Highlights" program at the State Theatre (July 20-22), the Bolshoi is scheduled to perform an excerpt from its muscle-popping ballet "Spartacus," by its artistic director, Yuri Grigorovich. Then, a bare week later, the Australian Ballet presents its evening-length "Spartacus" at the Met (July 27-29)—a United States première—by the Hungarian choreographer Laszlo Seregi. With all these armies clashing by night around the Lincoln Center plaza, we thought it might be helpful to list a few passwords that may be crucial to civilians in the area.

Spartacus—A guy who broke out of gladiator academy and whipped up a slave revolt against the Romans in southern Italy; died 71 B.C. in battle; six thousand followers were crucified on the highway.

Spartacus: The Book—A popular novel by Howard Fast, published in 1951.

Spartacus: The Movie—A 1960 film directed by Stanley Kubrick; the cast includes Kirk Douglas (in the title role), Laurence Olivier, Jean Simmons, Tony Curtis, Charles Laughton, Peter Ustinov, and Herbert Lom.

Spartacus: The Ballet to Beat (formerly "Spartacus: The Ballet")—Choreographed for the Bolshoi by Grigorovich, to music by Aram Khachaturian; given its première in 1968 with Vladimir Vasiliev (the Kirk Douglas role), Ekaterina Maximova, Maris Liepa, and Nina Timofeyeva. Not the only Soviet ballet on the theme, but the one that stuck.

Spartacus League—(1) A leftist group of some seventy years ago; (2) a club for people who have read the book, seen the movie, and attended at least two versions of the ballet.

Spartacusses—(1) *n. pl.*, as in, "I've seen all the 'Spartacusses' I need for League membership"; (2) *v., third pers. sing.*, as in, "So the box office tells him that there are no more tickets for the Bolshoi, and he Spartacusses them out."

Spartacussed—*adj.*, the condition of having been exposed to too many Spartacusses in a short period; see slimed.

Sparta-Tix—A special booth on Mt. Vesuvius to handle ticket orders.

Spartypants—You, too, can have that special, liberated look. Adult sizes only.

Spartacle—(1) var. of spectacle; (2) a pre-theatre cocktail party that features Spartachokes on toast, Spartacustard pie, and drinks made of two Sparts gin, one Spart vermouth.

Spartuition—The cost of a ticket to the Bolshoi "Highlights" program at the State Theatre ($105 for first ring).

Sparturition—The condition of sitting through a "Spartacus" ballet when you're tired or cranky; see having kittens.

IN TOWN

Bolshoi Ballet—Final performances of the engagement. July 17-19 at 8: "Ivan the Terrible." . . . ¶ July 20 at 8, July 21 at 2 and 8, and July 22 at 2: Highlights, including "Petrushka," Suite from "Spartacus," and "La Sylphide Pas de Deux." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

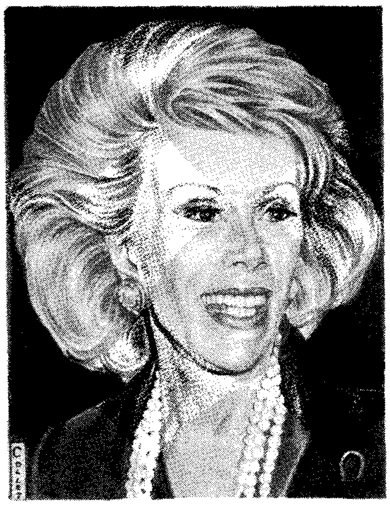
Australian Ballet—Opening performances of a one-week engagement that will run through July 29. On July 23 at 7 and July 24-25 at 8, "Suite en Blanc" and "Giselle" will be presented. (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

Gail Conrad—Ms. Conrad's "Dance Motel" is a thirty-minute tease that manages to be a densely worked dance show anyway. Its three men and three women, remarkable performers all, wear bruise-me–choose-me black. The taped music boomerangs over thirty years of pop. It could be MTV-land, except you won't believe how much legwork Ms. Conrad has packed into two banquettes' worth of space: at one point all three guys are doing sissonné splits. But the most startling thing is that, despite the close quarters and cues for drop-dead couple dancing, the sexes keep as separate from each other as if they were in adjoining gyms. (Birdland, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. 749-2228. July 19 and July 22 at 8. Through July 29.)

OUT OF TOWN

New York City Ballet—July 17 at 8:15: "Allegro Brillante," "Songs of the Auvergne," and "Brahms/Handel." . . . ¶ July 18 at 8:15: "The Goldberg Variations" and "Who Cares?" . . . ¶ July 19 at 2: "Coppélia." . . . ¶ July 19 at 8:15: "The Goldberg Variations" and "Brahms/Handel." . . . ¶ July 20 at 8:15: "Fanfare," "Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux," "Fearful Symmetries," and "Vienna Waltzes." . . . ¶ July 21 at 2:15: "Allegro Brillante," "Songs of the Auvergne," and "Who Cares?" . . . ¶ July 21 at 8:15: "Allegro Brillante," "Songs of the Auvergne," and "Brahms/Handel." . . . ¶ July 24 at 8:15: "Circus Polka," "Concerto Barocco," "Mozartiana," and "Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 2." . . . ¶ July 25 at 8:15: "Prague Symphony," "Kammermusik No. 2," "Tarantella," and "Vienna Waltzes." (Saratoga Performing Arts Center, Saratoga Springs. 1-518 587-3330. Through July 28.)

Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival—The American Ballroom Theatre, July 17-21. . . . ¶ Urban Bush Women, July 24-28. . . . ¶ Ka Pa Hula Hawai'i Hula and Halau Hula O Hoakalei, July 24-28. (Becket, Mass. For information about show times and tickets, call 1-413 243-0745.)



Joan Rivers at Michael's Pub

NIGHT LIFE

IT'LL never be as big as Bon Jovi, but klezmer music—traditional Eastern European Yiddish music—is enjoying a mini-vogue. One of the most visible champions of the resurgence is the young clarinettist Don Byron, who has lately been giving concerts devoted to the music of Mickey Katz, an entertainer and songwriter who ruled the Borscht Belt in the forties and fifties. Other klezmer proponents, too, have been doing their part. We recently attended KlezFest '90, at Symphony Space, which featured the Klezmatics, a local group that formed in 1986 and that will be performing on the Central Park Summerstage on July 22, and Shirim, a Boston-based ensemble. If you're thinking of starting your own klezmer band, here's what you'll need: a clarinet, an accordion, a horn or two, a violin (optional), a rhythm section, and a knowledge of Yiddish beyond the odd "klutz," "schmalz," or "chutzpah." Also, if you really want to compete in the modern klezmer arena, it might help to be conversant in jazz, minimalism, and an array of international styles, because today's klezmer player is not a rube from the shtetl but an eclectic, versatile musician who is as likely to play at a downtown performance space as at a Jewish wedding.

Shirim features two young female singers and has a wide-ranging repertoire: traditional klezmer music; "La Vie en Rose" sung in Yiddish; songs from the new country (one about looking for cute guys at Coney Island); and original, klezmer-meets-the-moderns compositions. The Klezmatics were the more impressive of the two bands. The group has some excellent soloists, and they blend traditional and modern idioms to produce music that's full of fervor, tension, and mysticism. They also explain the Yiddish lyrics. Lorin Sklamberg, the accordionist and vocalist, introduced a Russian song from the twenties by saying that it's about how Jews can be farmers as well as peddlers, and that if anyone tells you otherwise "you should spit in their face."

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

BALLROOM, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A sleek cabaret on the edge of Chelsea. **BETTY,** a three-woman singing group adept at keeping its audience off balance and slightly unnerved, is in residence just now. Their show—equal parts performance art, cabaret, satirical funk, and standup comedy—moves at an amphetamine pace, and features a fun-house mix of surreal stories, ironic wordplay, and blue humor. Show times are Wednesdays through Saturdays at nine.

BIRDLAND, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—The jazz personnel turns over nearly every night at this airy, loftlike restaurant-bar, in the gray zone between Zabar's and Columbia. Some may cry gentrification at the sight of the pastel walls, the potted greenery, and the bar crowded with Frascati sippers, but the floor-to-ceiling windows make for some fine Broadway-viewing. The schedule for the week: **BOPERA HOUSE** (July 18); the **GEOFF KEEZER** quartet (July 20-21); the **JOYCE DI CAMILLO** trio (July 22); and the **JOHN HART** trio, which will be making a live recording (July 24-25). Music from nine Sundays through Thursdays and from nine-thirty Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

BLUE NOTE, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—A glitzy, color-coördinated jazz house, designed for maximum seating efficiency, where blue-suspendered waitresses sweep by your table bearing shrimp cocktails, champagne, and other trappings of the good life. After the show, out-of-towners flock to the upstairs souvenir shop, where, at last check, Blue Note golf balls were still available. **JIMMY** and **JEANNIE CHEATHAM,** a husband-and-wife blues team (he plays trombone, she sings and plays piano), will be here July 17-22. Pianist **ALLEN FARNHAM** comes in July 23. Music from nine. Dining.

BOTTOM LINE, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—The **NITTY GRITTY DIRT BAND,** who'll perform here July 18, started out in the late sixties, and before long their clean, harmony-heavy country-rock inspired groups like Alabama and the Eagles. In the early seventies, the Dirt Band released an all-star country album called "Will the Circle Be Unbroken?"; the second volume of the album, including performances by John Hiatt, among others, came out recently. July 19-20 belongs to **ERIC JOHNSON,** a pyrotechnical guitarist hailing from (geographically) Austin, Texas, and (musically) Jimi Hendrix and Jeff Beck. **ROGER MC GUINN** comes in on July 21, and July 23 belongs to **BLUE NILE.** The latter is an enigmatic, slightly melancholy synth-pop trio from Scotland. The band's début album, "A Walk Across the Rooftops," got a remarkable critical reception and it has taken them five years to release an equally strong follow-up, entitled "Hats." The **FORESTER SISTERS** will be here July 25. Shows Sundays through Thursdays at eight and eleven, and Fridays and Saturdays at eight-thirty and eleven-thirty. Burgers, fries, and other things to make your heart beat faster.

BRADLEY'S, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A neighborhood bar where, if your neighbors coöperate, you can hear the beautiful, singular sound of musicians thinking. A trio consisting of **CEDAR WALTON, BILLY HIGGINS,** and **DAVID WILLIAMS** is at work here through July 21; **BERTHA HOPE, JUNIOR COOK,** and **WALTER BOOKER** pass through on July 22; and **JOANNE BRACKEEN** and **CECIL MC BEE** start a week-long gig on July 23. Music from nine-forty-five.

CARLYLE HOTEL, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Bemelmans Bar is currently home to pianist **FRANK OWENS.** Music from nine-thirty Tuesdays through Saturdays.

CONDON'S, 117 E. 15th St. (254-0960)—In the shadow of the Zeckendorf Towers sits this low-ceilinged, stucco-walled grotto, whose intimate scale makes it a fine spot for jazz. **JAMES NEWTON**—a virtuosic flutist whose work covers, as he has put it, "the whole spectrum of music and then some"—leads a quartet here July 17-22. A quartet belonging to **SAM RIVERS** starts up on July 24. Music begins after ten.

FAT TUESDAY'S, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—If submarines had jazz clubs, they might look like this basement haunt, which is reached by passing through a tight corridor where you half expect to bump into Admiral Nimitz. This is not the place for those with a fear of intimacy: at the front tables you can go eye to eye with your favorite performers, and no matter where you're seated there's not much room to practice your T'ai Chi. Singer **ABBEY LINCOLN** will be here with a quartet July 17-22. Trombonist **AL GREY,** who spent a couple of decades in the Count Basie Orchestra and who has long been known as a master of the rubber-plunger mute, leads a new quintet here as of July 24. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL,** the Thomas Edison of reverb, leads a trio. Music from eight. Dining.

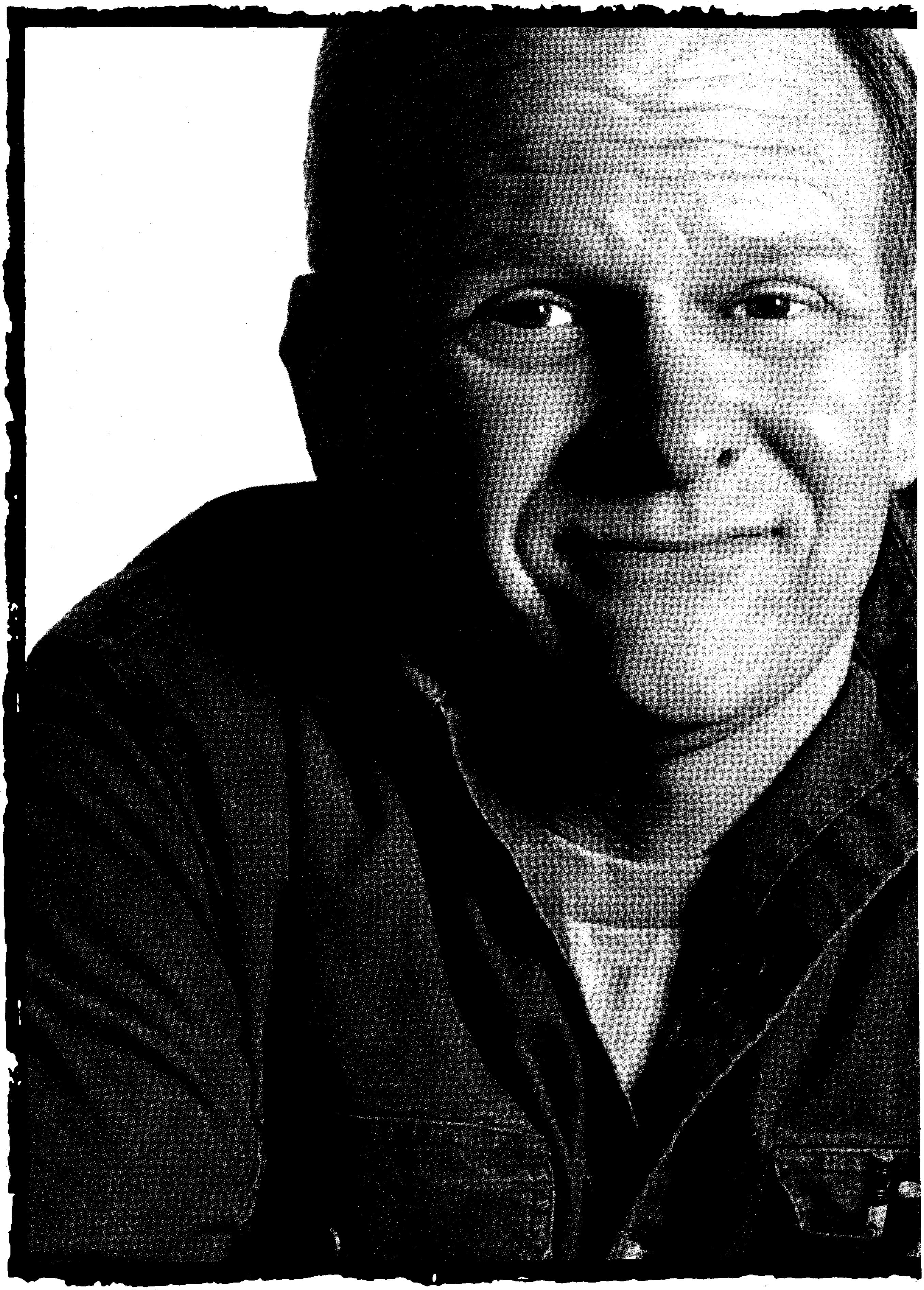
INDIGO BLUES, 221 W. 46th St. (221-0033)—A modernist night spot in the basement of the Hotel Edison. There's a glass-brick reception area, an oval blond-wood bar, and other interior-design novelties. The lighting—blue neon, in laserlike strips and wide halos—works on the eyes like a long day in front of the PC. Latin-jazz percussionist **MONGO SANTAMARIA**—bongos and congas are a specialty—will be here July 20-21. Music starts after nine.

J'S, 2581 Broadway, at 97th St. (666-3600)—An Upper West Side jazz room, one steep flight up from the hurly-burly. Jazz people are on the premises nightly except Sundays. The torchy contralto Starla (Ol' Hazel Eyes) Smith rides in on July 22 with a show that includes a few country-and-Western favorites. She'll also tell a joke or two and lasso some more sophisticated selections. Music from eight Sundays through Thursdays, and from nine on the weekends. Dining.

LONE STAR ROADHOUSE, 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—A cheery, climate-controlled restaurant and bar where a bleary-eyed patron was once heard remarking, "I don't know about you people, but I'm feeling a lot of love in this room." **O POSITIVE,** a moody, eclectic rock outfit and the latest good news from Boston, will perform here July 17. **EMMYLOU HARRIS,** who, more than fifteen years ago, served her country-music apprenticeship playing in what she has referred to as "the better hippie honky-tonks of the nation," comes in with the **O'KANES** on July 23. Music after eight-thirty.

MAXWELL'S, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken (1-201 798-4064)—The legends of Hoboken are many. Some of the legends are true: Sinatra did grow up here; in certain parts of town, the air does smell of Maxwell House coffee (although not for much longer). Some of the legends are iffy: Was the first game of baseball really played here? Does former Hüsker Dü chieftain Bob Mould actually live in Hoboken? (John Sayles, maybe, but *Bob Mould?*) At Maxwell's—which will carry on even when the Maxwell House factory closes

At the Bottom Line: Robert Bell, Paul Buchanan, and Paul Moore of Blue Nile



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"The idea of computers in the factory used to scare the daylights out of me. Now I run one."

"I figured I'd get burned either way—computers show up and I get fired, or computers don't show up and the plant closes down.

"But what happened is, they retooled the plant and while that was going on they sent me to school, to an IBM-sponsored course at the community college.

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NIGHT LIFE–Cont'd

its doors, in 1992—you won't find all the answers, but you will find bands, bands, bands. Sometimes, you'll find as many as five a night. A few of this week's entries: the Miracle Room (July 19); the Selves (July 20); and Wreckless Eric (July 21).

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—A midtown restaurant and jazz lair for the tasselled-loafers set. The dark, sombre bar (carved-wood lions, iron grillwork) looks like a place you'd find in London's financial district; the dining room—putting-green carpet, lime-green leather banquettes, panelled ceiling—has more of a country-club feel. **SID CAESAR** and **IMOGENE COCA** are currently reliving the halcyon days of "Your Show of Shows." Shows Tuesdays through Saturdays. Comedienne and talk-show host **JOAN** ("Can we talk?") **RIVERS** does standup July 19 at ten-thirty. Closed Sundays.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—A great, pricey cabaret in the sky. Some statistics on singer **PATTI PAGE,** who holds sway here through July 21: she grew up in Claremore, Oklahoma, with ten brothers and sisters; she had at least one song in Billboard's Top One Hundred every year between 1948 and 1982; and her single "Tennessee Waltz" is the second-biggest-selling song of all time (you know the first—it's about Christmas). Shows from nine. Dining. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

Rock Academy, 234 W. 43rd St. (947-5850)—The Dublin-based band **HOTHOUSE FLOWERS,** who have just released "Home," their second album, and who will be performing here July 17, combine so many influences that they sound like nothing so much as themselves. The band owes a debt to Springsteen and Van Morrison, as well as to traditional Irish music and gospel. Hothouse Flowers' lyrics occasionally drown in sixties earnestness—the group's new single, "Give It Up," sounds like it was commissioned by VISTA—but their concerts are euphoric and primal. Twenty-five-year-old singer-pianist Liam O'Maonlai plays a wild, Jerry Lee Lewis-style piano and works the crowd into such a state that, after two and a half hours, they don't know whether to say amen or uncle. Music at eight.

Savoy Grille, 131 E. 54th St. (593-8800)—A little nest off Lexington for young people on their way home from Madison. The restaurant-and-bar has a yellowish light that's easy on the eyes; a small dance floor, which lovestruck patrons dash to between courses; and earnest waiters who stop just short of acting out the menu. The **BOBBY COLE** trio is in residence just now, from nine Monday through Saturday.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—An itinerary stop for the international jazz groupies who, on any given night, can be seen roaming the streets of the Village. Up front, there's a glass-enclosed sidewalk café; in back is a larger room, with a pressed-tin ceiling, red brick, and more pinewood than a ski lodge. The gentle-toned flugelhorn player **ART FARMER** leads a quintet (including saxophonist **CLIFFORD JORDAN**) through July 22. Pianist **TOMMY FLANAGAN** and his trio begin a two-week stay on July 24. The Lou Donaldson Quartet is in action on July 16 and 23. Tee-off time is ten. Dining.

Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. (475-5120)—A venerable jazz all-in-one. On July 23, **EDDIE PALMIERI** will be performing downstairs, along with the **HILTON RUIZ** quintet (featuring **DANIEL PONCE**), and **BILLY TAYLOR.** Music from ten.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—This windowless, pie-shaped basement has an illustrious history that embraces everyone from Judy Holliday to Lenny Bruce, from Pete Seeger and Leadbelly to Miles Davis and Sonny Rollins. The décor is homey and a little faded, like an attic full of memorabilia, but the music is anything but stale. **KENNY BURRELL,** a mellow, lyrical exponent of bop guitar, leads a quartet here through July 22; saxophonist **DAVID (FATHEAD) NEWMAN** begins a week-long engagement on July 24. Mondays are reserved for the late Mel Lewis's big band. Music after ten.

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Two floors of no-nuke veggie entertainment and consciousness-raising. Listen to bands play in the Summer of Love-muralled back room; buy a tie-dyed T-shirt at the Volkswagen-bus curio shop; catch up on current events at the bulletin board and community calendar. Or, if you'd rather just be mellow, crash out in the basement hippie love pad. The spirited rock ensemble known as **POI DOG PONDERING** comes in on July 22.

Zanzibar & Grill, 550 Third Ave., at 36th St. (779-0606)—A Murray Hill jazz resort, where the ceiling fans turn slowly, and the palm trees rustle tropically, and the jukebox contains Xavier Cugat and Perez Prado, and a waiter, delivering a plate of fried chicken and maple-pear corn bread to a customer, sings "It's suppertime" (to the tune of "Summertime"). The professional musicians tend to come on at around nine. **MIKE MAINERI** will be here July 19; the **MINO CINELU ALL-STARS** come in on July 21; and **ROY GERSON'S** septet performs on July 23.

EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

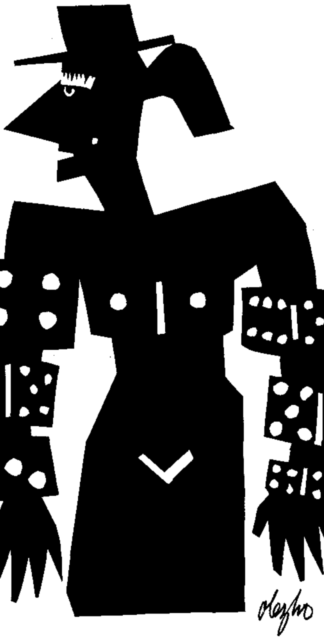
If nothing else, it's the cleverest name for a club in years—and perhaps the most arrogant. Palace de Beauté, indeed: novice beauticians at the Wilfred Beauty Academy work harder on make-overs. Take one disco dinosaur, throw up drywall, paint it gold, drape some schmattes, et voilà! It's like Jack Klugman waking up one morning and deciding to call himself Phillipe du Printemps.

But, strangely enough, it's worked. It's 1 A.M.—do you know where your children are? If it's Tuesday, and your kids live in big black shoes, cut-offs that could pass for re-mem-mem-re-mem-mem-mem-ba hot pants, a shirt more shredded than a bowl of breakfast cereal, a bad haircut, and they ain't in Belgium, they're probably at Larry Tee's Love Machine. Behold a crowd so young that when this place was known as the Underground they were squealing for Underdog. They smoke as if their favorite aunts had left them real-estate holdings around Raleigh-Durham. One-third of them spend the whole night handing out club invitations to the very people who would go out for an open bar during a locust attack; another third think they're the reason you came out and behave accordingly, posing in an I'm-as-good-as-a-Soul-Train-dancer-'cept-there's-no-camera-flashing-on-me attitude that somehow justifies overhearing "I'd love to smmmack her" three times; and the final third don't give a damn about the terrible entertainment interludes. (One performer, after an introduction of "He's from Canada . . . No, he's from Mexico . . . He's an international sensation," turned in such a frightening segue from striptease to high kicks during a lip-synch of "If My Friends Could See Me Now" that a member of the captive audience cracked, "Yeah, if he has any after this.")

At least some of the crowd *does* give a damn about dancing. Despite the surly box-office girl (We'd love to smmmack *her*), another four God-knows-where-they're-from-but-they're-sensational stage shows, and voguers hogging the mirror under the staircase, the best aspects of the Palace (860 Broadway) are the dirty-house/jack-swing music and a floor worn to sledding smoothness. If you're older than Big Bird, bring friends who like to boogie so you won't feel alone. And don't be afraid that they won't want to go out. Just tell them a club of Beauté is a joy forever. At least until they change the name again.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY

Pat Oleszko's new one-woman performance, which will take place July 24 as part of Lincoln Center's "Serious Fun!" festival, is called "Bluebeard's Hassle," but we figured out when we were watching a rehearsal recently that Bluebeard is just a front man for Oleszko's huge, meandering imagination and its by-products. The wife killer makes a brief, symbolic appearance at the outset as a bearded, remote-controlled jeep. Then, with the ogre in the wings, Oleszko turns happily to her own devices—gigantic, inflatable props and wildly theatrical costumes—to describe, as she puts it, "the writhes of the wives." Think Cindy Sherman, think Easter Parade, think of a child playing dress-up. Like Sherman, Oleszko presents versions of herself over and over, but her images are not static. She's a rhyming, punning, vogueing, shrieking performer—a social critic, a comic, and a vamp.



Self-portrait by Pat Oleszko

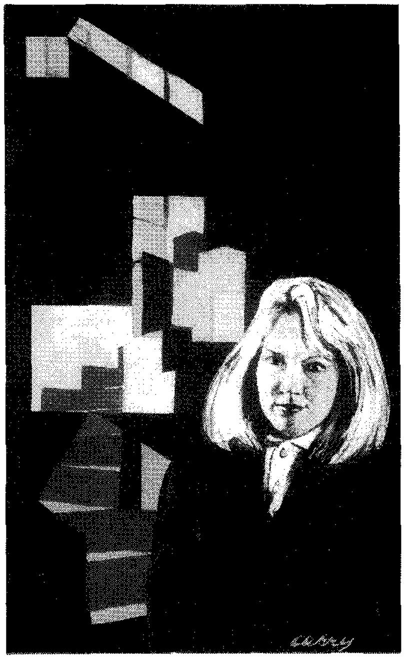
"Bluebeard" is a series of vignettes that are derived from familiar fairy tales but veer immediately into the land of the absurd, where logic is as irrelevant as gravity on the moon. One wife, the Free Little Pig, is an artist whose apartment is repeatedly toppled by a mammoth, inflatable Yupposaurus: seven faceless businessmen carrying briefcases. Another, Pussy in Boots, is a feline hooker turned women's-rights activist who wears a ratskin stole and chapeau to complement her thigh-high boots.

When the rehearsal was over, we watched Oleszko stuff the costumes and deflated monsters into small, brightly colored sacks. She's a tall, athletic woman (she runs marathons), and as she heaved the sacks around she looked like a counsellor at a whacked-out summer camp. We asked her what she thought Bluebeard's wives had in common, and she said, as she wiped the sweat off her brow, "I think of them all as survivors."

SERIOUS FUN!—July 17-18: The Ridge Theatre company in a new work by John Moran, "The Manson Family: Helter Five-0," in which Charles Manson meets Steve McGarrett. . . . ¶ July 19: Urban Bush Women perform "Praise House" and Robbie McCauley and Jeannie Hutchins perform "Sally's Rape." . . . ¶ July 20: An evening of new music with the Piano Circus, the Soldier String Quartet, Mary Rowell, and David Moss. . . . ¶ July 21: Three men—Harry Shearer, Tom Cayler, and Christian Swenson—address the subject of being men. . . . ¶ July 22 and July 25: Karen Finley in "We Keep Our Victims Ready." . . . ¶ July 24: One-acts and other antics, with Pat Oleszko, Leo Bassi, the Shrimps, and David Ives. (Alice Tully Hall. 362-1911. Evenings at 8. The festival runs through Aug. 2.)

"FATHER WAS A PECULIAR MAN"—A performance piece with wide-ranging themes, presented by En Garde Arts and staged in the meatpacking district. (Audience members meet at the corner of Ninth Ave. and Little West 12th St., July 18-21 at 9. For tickets, call 279-4200.)

P.S. 122—July 19-22 at 8: Ethyl Eichelberger presents his latest, "Das Vedanya, Mama." Through July 29. . . . ¶ July 19-22 at 9:30: Terry Sweeney in "It's Still My Turn: An Unauthorized Collection of Nancy Reagan's Private Poetry." (First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)



Sarah Charlesworth at Gorney

ART

"STENDHAL SYNDROME: THE CURE" is a misbegotten, truly sophomoric group show at the Rosen gallery (130 Prince Street; through August 3), for which forty-eight artists were invited to come up with antidotes to a condition that most closely resembles a *maladie d'amour.* Stendhal—the pseudonym of the great Marie-Henri Beyle—did not actually give this particular ailment his name, though he did refer to a certain aggressive form of amorous egotism as "Beylism." He did, however, describe a combination of romantic and aesthetic devastation—whose symptoms might include dizziness, nausea, fainting, feelings of sexual depression and deep loneliness, temporary dementia, and the inability to leave one's room—which he first experienced during his travels in Italy as a young man, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, not long after serving in Napoleon's army. Suffering young aesthetes on summer programs in Florence have been grateful to him ever since for the diagnosis. Like ordinary lovesickness, it is an illness arguably worth having at least once, at least slightly, though its sensitive survivors tend not to consider themselves ordinary at all.

None of the artists represented in "Stendhal Syndrome: The Cure" deal directly with any of these fascinating symptoms and causes. None, in fact, betray any firsthand knowledge of the subject, even on a literary level—apart, perhaps, from last year's *Times* report on the findings of a Florentine psychiatrist, which effectively popularized news of this élite, effete yet powerful *mal*—though Jessica Diamond has the presence of mind to quote Nabokov and to question the need for a cure. This is a bit sad for a group of four dozen artists, and it is a pity in this regard that a more high-flown sensibility, such as the poet-painter Rene Ricard's, was not involved. Many made iconic or ironic use of little metal first-aid kits offered by the exhibition's organizers, and produced crummy little altars to overwhelming beauty or crummy little altars to beauty's "death." Inexplicably, a few of these included mini-sound systems—as if music were the cure for, and not the food of, love.

Stendhal made a kind of peace with his "syndrome" by living for many years in Milan—a tough-minded city of mostly concealed treasures, not unlike New York. The odd soul suffering from aesthetic overdose in town this summer might find a comfortable palliative at the Met, where two austerely poetic frame shows currently offer considerable beauty and the occasional mirror, but not too much art.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"From Poussin to Matisse" includes some superb works among its fifty paintings, most notably Poussin's "Tancred and Ermina," Watteau's "The Savoyard," and Fragonard's "The Stolen Kiss." There are some kitschy paintings as well, like Boucher's bawdy "Hercules and Omphale" and Vernet's startlingly mysterious "The Death of Virginie." Yet, despite the over-all quality, the pick-hit format is not engaging; the show doesn't really get going until the end, where there is a room of ten glorious Matisses painted between 1908 and 1913, which are among his finest works. Through July 29. . . . ¶ More than sixty sets of clothing worn by children from the eighteenth century to the twentieth are on view in the Costume Institute. Through Sept. 9. . . . ¶ When two-thirds of the frames in a show are empty, one knows to pay strict attention to the frames themselves. That is the desired effect of "Italian Renaissance Frames," which includes more than a hundred of the carved and gilded beauties. In a few cases—a Botticelli, an El Greco—paintings enhance what are works of art in themselves. Through Sept. 2. . . . ¶ In another show, fifty-five American frames from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are on view. Through Sept. 2. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Matisse in Morocco." The belief is becoming more widespread that Matisse's greatness has been eclipsed by Picasso's because so many of the Frenchman's best works have been hidden away in Soviet museums. The case is persuasively argued by this glorious display of paintings—close to half of them from the Pushkin and the Hermitage—and drawings that Matisse made during two trips to Morocco in 1912 and 1913. The so-called Moroccan Triptych is as sumptuous as painting gets, and all of the works are so rich that it's fortunate the show is lean and concise. Through Sept. 4. . . . ¶ A retrospective featuring fifty-nine paintings by Francis Bacon. Through Aug. 28. . . . ¶ Several photo-text pieces by Lorna Simpson, dealing with race, gender, and identity. Through Aug. 26. . . . ¶ A show of paintings, sculptures, collages, and photographs selected by Ellsworth Kelly. Included are works by Picabia, Brancusi, Malevich, and Mondrian. Through Sept. 4. . . . ¶ "Architectural Drawings of the Russian Avant-Garde." Through Sept. 4. . . . **NOTE:** The museum's sculpture garden, at 14 W. 54th St., is open, free, on Fridays and Saturdays from 6 to 10, with musicians from the Juilliard School performing at 7:30. (The museum is open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The museum is closed for renovation until autumn, 1991.

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—If an artist's value were measured by his influence, Hans Hofmann (1880-1966) would certainly be among the most important of this century: he trained more American young hopefuls than anyone else. But one need only look at MOMA's current "Matisse in Morocco" show to realize that Hofmann was a fine but ultimately minor artist. He certainly knew how to paint, and there are many charmers in this meticulously arranged retrospective, along with a few great paintings—"Memoria in Aeternum" and "Song of the Nightingale" float to the top. But there's also a lot of well-balanced glop. Hofmann represents the beginning of the end for abstract painting, offering vision without ever being a visionary. In the long run he may be best remembered not as the mentor of Burgoyne Diller, Louise Nevelson, Alfred Jensen, and Helen Frankenthaler but as the dean of abstract painting, a teacher who transformed scores of unfocussed artists into competent ones by training them to make "good" compositions that "worked." Through Sept. 16. . . . ¶ Another retrospective, of more than a hundred paintings by Maurice Prendergast (1858-1924). Through Sept. 2. . . . ¶ "Signs of Love," a large-scale installation work by Ree Morton (1936-77). Through July 22. (Open Tuesdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM, Eastern Parkway—A compare-and-contrast exercise is offered in a show of thirty-three watercolors by Winslow Homer (1836-1910) and John Singer Sargent (1856-1925). Through Sept. 3. . . . ¶ "The Intimate Interiors of Édouard Vuillard" includes more than a hundred paintings and works on paper, all completed between 1890 and 1900. Through July 30. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

FRICK COLLECTION, 1 E. 70th St.—A selection of nearly a hundred and fifty Chinese porcelain wine pots, jars, dishes, and vases made between 1620 and 1683 is on view. Through Aug. 19. (Open daily, except Mondays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

GROLIER CLUB, 47 E. 60th St.—Eighty-two examples of incunabula—books printed before 1501, no more than fifty years after the invention of printing—from the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica, in Amsterdam. Through Aug. 24. (Open Mondays through Fridays, 10 to 5.)

JEWISH MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—Two displays of photographic works by the artists Wijnanda Deroo and Hélène Hourmat. Through Aug. 2. (Open Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, noon to 5; Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge from 5 to 8; Sundays, 11 to 6.)

MORGAN LIBRARY, 29 E. 36th St.—From an exquisite portrait of a woman by Petrus Christus to a delicate watercolor of the Château Noir by Paul Cézanne, this superb exhibition of five centuries of master drawings from the Museum Boymans-van Beuningen (in Rotterdam) is a joy. There is a toe-curling drawing of feet by Dürer, a spellbinding allegory called "Temperance" by Bruegel, a mystifying and exceedingly rare Giorgione, and fine examples by Altdorfer, Grünewald, Rembrandt, Annibale Carracci, Pisanello, and Goya. There are Watteaus that could make you weep, as well as fine works by Ingres, Daumier, and Manet.

Through Aug. 5. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—The Gibson Girl did everything: she boated, she bicycled, she played tennis, she drove, she partied, and she married. Of course, all of these pursuits demanded different costumes, and Charles Dana Gibson's turn-of-the-century drawings created the kind of versatile mystique that would make Calvin Klein fall off his horse. The Gibson Girl's heyday, from 1895 to 1905, is celebrated in this show of thirteen full costumes, along with drawings, photographs, and memorabilia. (Open daily, except Mondays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Mondays through Fridays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Group Show—In keeping with the Gagosian gallery's ongoing and often successful campaign to resemble a wing at the Modern, it is now home to a rotating group of textbook classics by Rothko, Newman, de Kooning, Gorky, Franz Klein, Warhol, Rauschenberg, and Lichtenstein. The gallery looks impressive, but with no stylistic surprises to set off this drumroll it seems cold and even staid. Through Aug. 31. (980 Madison Ave., at 76th St.)

Short List—**a. r. penck,** Werner, 21 E. 67th St. (through July 20); **max weber,** Forum, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St. (through July 20).

GALLERIES—57th STREET AREA

"Re-entry Into Painting: 1969-74"—By displaying early paintings by Joe Zucker, Brad Davis, Robert Kushner, and Kim McConnell alongside the works of that famed New Image forebear Neil Jenney, this exhibition attempts to trace the influence of decorative artists on later figuration. The most eye-opening work is a fierce painting, by Brad Davis, of snakes entwined around a tattoolike dagger and a skull, executed in a crackle style with kaleidoscope colors; it recalls militaristic camouflage patterns and the then ubiquitous countercultural technique of tie-dye. Zucker's cotton-ball painting of an aquarium drenched with color is stunning, hovering between image and abstraction. There are also drawings of costumes from some of Kushner's earliest performances, and his painting on taffeta of pomegranates on the vine. Together, they link the artist's flamboyant Matissean style with that period's rich vein of body art. Through July 31. (Holly Solomon, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Group Shows—At the **galerie lelong,** 20 W. 57th St.: Curated by Burnett Miller, a well-known Los Angeles art dealer, this cool and coherent show documents a resurgence of minimalism, but in a new, more sensuous, mannered mood. Established artists include Ulrich Ruckriem and Wolfgang Laib, but the news has to do with promising younger artists, such as the California-based Sarah Seager—whose influences seem to include Dan Flavin and Robert Ryman—and the Romanian-born Serge Spitzer, now based in Berlin and New York, whose milled-aluminum wall reliefs with rubber matting suggest that Ryman was an inspiration here, too. Through July 27. . . . **galerie st. etienne,** 24 W. 57th St.: Recent gallery acquisitions by Gustav Klimt, Egon Schiele, George Grosz, Max Klinger, Käthe Kollwitz, various Wiener Werkstätte artists, and the redoubtable Sue Coe. Seeing Coe in proximity to Kollwitz is especially interesting. They are nearly exact opposites, though both aim for essentially the same expressionistic, empathic, and incriminating effects. Where Kollwitz distills all sorrows into "universal," quasi-ecclesiastical images—bereft mothers, work-worn hands—Coe hits our collective jugular through the journalistic precision of her slaughterhouse scenes and the fierce theatrics of her allegories, which are always of highly specific evils. Through Aug. 31. (Closed Mondays.)

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GALLERIES—SoHo

David Hockney—A fascinating selection of drawings from the early sixties executed in a raw, scratchy style, done before the artist's line became too fluid and easy. They reveal a sense of struggle and torment, and perhaps a hint of Bacon and Dubuffet. Through July 27. (Kasmin, 580 Broadway.)

Teddy Schapiro / Chris Wilder—Ordinary-seeming people are combined in peculiar ways bordering on the surreal in these curious paintings. Executed in a dry, regionalist style with backgrounds the colors of Necco Wafers, the works have the subtly perverse space seen in early David Salles. / An amusing and somewhat farfetched mixed-media installation about U.F.O.s, originality, and truth. The piece utilizes several appropriated texts—including one about an unrealized art work by the California perceptualist Michael Asher—a mirror, screen prints, paintings on iridescent fabrics favored by drag queens, and a pink Ping-Pong ball. Through July 27. (Petersburg, 130 Prince St.)

Christopher Wool—Large paintings on paper, of either a Penckian phoenix or what might be described as a black putto done in the racist style of thirties Hollywood movies. The two images are arranged in various combinations—singly, in pairs, as friezes. The paintings are smart-ass, cynical works about the state of originality and the role of the artist in today's art world, but they are also surprisingly penetrating and pack a hard punch. Through Sept. 12. (Luhring Augustine, 130 Prince St.)

"The Book as Art / The Book in Art"—From the Dadaists to contemporary artists as diverse as Ed Ruscha, Sol LeWitt, and Jenny Holzer, books have provided one of the richest formats for artistic exploration. Although recent attacks on freedom of expression have brought a new relevance to the written word, this exhibition favors artists who use books as objects, as forms, with a decidedly anti-reading emphasis. There are delicate porcelain pieces that look like burnt or worm-eaten books, for example, and German phone books that have been torn and arranged in circular patterns. Works by a few "names," like Rauschenberg and Samaras, are thrown in for legitimacy. Through July 31. (Fendrick, 568 Broadway, entrance on Prince St.)

"Drawings"—This exhibition includes some gorgeous drawings by four masters of the medium—de Kooning, Gorky, Westermann, and Marden—as well as an odd selection of works by contemporary artists like Kelly, Sandback, and Rockburne, whose drawings offer little, particularly in comparison with their paintings. Through Aug. 3. (Lennon, Weinberg, 580 Broadway. Closed Mondays.)

Group Shows—At **baghoomian,** 555 Broadway: One large canvas has—without irony—the word "inspiration" painted up its center, but that quality seems out of reach for most of the lesser-known artists represented here. Each piece looks like the work of somebody else: there's reprocessed Eva Hesse, and more than a few reminders of Art Brut and the Cobra group. Then, there are the glazed black-and-yellow geometric painted constructions of Ford Beckman, who seems to be the only one engaged in a willful act of referencing. One of his more interesting two-part works, which are handsome but somewhat tiresome, manages to merge the principles of the proto-minimalist painting of Reinhardt, Newman, and Kelly with a distrust of that style's very seductiveness. Through July 27. . . . **burgin,** 130 Prince St.: The work of the three artists in this exhibition is tied together dubiously by a recurring motif of scratchy, nervous swirls, but the result is a handsome, form-coördinated installation. A series of quite beautiful recent drawings by John Cage displays a faint, balletic scratchiness; and Richard Tuttle's constructions of cut and curled paper, with their loose strands of glue as delicate as silk thread, are rickety but soothing. There is also a large standing sculpture by Alan Saret made of bent chain-link fencing. Through July 31. (Closed Mondays.) . . . **gladstone,** 99 Greene St.: A cool and moody summer exhibition, including a Robert Gober "sink," here looking very Standard, indeed; a big airy stretch of graphic wall scripture, "As If It Had Not," by the cryptically wise Lawrence Weiner; and a group of large, velvety photographs, melancholic and terribly beautiful, by Craigie Horsfield, a public-schooled Englishman looking downward, leftward, and eastward. Horsfield's pictures have something in common with the films of Alain Tanner—an erotics, perhaps, and a feeling of sensuous alienation. Through July 27. . . . **gorney,** 100 Greene St.: A summerfest for artist strategists, including Sarah Charlesworth, whose work—art-directed layouts fit for a shelter magazine—can run shallow but wears well. Also, assorted works of varying appeal by Michael Jenkins, Thomas Locher, Peter Nadin, and Haim Steinbach. Through July 27. . . . **postmasters,** 80 Greene St.: A show of artists who deal with various aspects of postmodern existence in quirky ways. Oddest in this show is a series of "drawings" by Sean Landers, in the form of handwritten short stories by the artist's alter ego, Chris Hanson, which are titled "Art, Life, and God," but are really about sex, rejection, and narcissism. A sculpture by the same artist features a broken classical statue embedded in a stocky tube of what looks like Dippity-Do. Through July 20. (Closed Mondays). . . . **weber,** 142 Greene St.: Especially notable in this handsome show are a sheltering fabric wall relief by Franz Erhard Walther that follows in the medical/shamanistic line of Beuys, two 1966 stripe paintings by the elegant subversive Daniel Buren, two expressionistically hacked wood sculptures by Mel Kendrick, and two walls full of the shiny, painted plaster surrogates of Allan McCollum, which walk the line between ennui and magic with intelligence and concision. Through Aug. 24.

Short List—**georg baselitz,** Nolan, 560 Broadway (closed Mondays, through July 20); **moe brooker,** Kelly, 591 Broadway (through July 20); **michael goulet,** Shainman, 560 Broadway (open Saturdays, through July 20); **dmitri kantorov,** Levy, 415 West Broadway (through July 20); **ellsworth kelly,** 65 Thompson Street Gallery (closed Mondays, through July 31); **morihiro wada,** Milliken, 98 Prince St. (closed Mondays, through July 20).

OTHER GALLERIES

"Looking at a Revolution: Documenting the AIDS Activist Movement"—One of the most concise and potent images to have entered New York's visual culture in the eighties is the now ubiquitous "Silence=Death" logo, which helped to mobilize community reactions against the kind of homophobic thinking that has resulted in the government's neglectful AIDS policies. The show presents posters, T-shirts, buttons, videos, and photographs of protests and actions, primarily those of ACT UP. The images include Gran Fury's bus poster, which appropriates the style of a slick Benetton ad and reinterprets it with various combinations of kissing couples. In another, unauthored poster, a picture of Cardinal O'Connor is juxtaposed with the improbably similar shape of an open condom. Across the top are printed the words "Know Your Scumbags," and the condom is labelled "This One Prevents AIDS." As the works indicate, the issues and pleas remain the same, but the anger and frustration mount as the magnitude of the tragedy increases. One poster from 1988 reads "1 AIDS Death Every 30 Minutes"; a flyer from May, 1990, reads "1 AIDS Death Every 12 Minutes." Through July 20. (Watson, 241 Lafayette St. Closed Mondays.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

THE emergence of a new magazine dedicated to photography is always worth a toast. But the arrival of *déjà-vu* is especially propitious, since the quarterly, which is published in Tokyo, will give us an opportunity to see and know more about photography in Japan. The first issue of the magazine appeared in Tokyo last week, and we're told it will be available here in certain bookstores soon. (A year's subscription costs a hundred and fifty dollars; order from Photo-Planète Co., Ltd. 3-21-14-402 Higashi, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo, Japan 150.)

Déjà-vu has the openness and idealism that newborn projects often have; it includes work by well-known Japanese photographers who have had some exposure here, such as Daido Moriyama, as well as others whose pictures will be new to almost everyone. It also carries essays and reviews, but not so many that the magazine loses its sense of being a picture book. (It's even more so for us since we don't know Japanese, and only the contents page and a letter from the editor are translated into English.) Although the theme of nature comes up again and again, we were struck by the way the magazine embraces different styles and a wide variety of approaches to photography. This receptivity was apparent even before we opened *déjà-vu:* the front and back covers each show a photograph of a wide-open eye, one marked up with white paint, the other with black. These images suggest that the usual split between art and photography is not at work here, and the contents inside bear this out. The eyes also remind us of many other images we've seen before—among them, the unforgettable shots of eyeballs in the movie "Un Chien Andalou," by Salvador Dalí and Luis Buñuel. But then, the sense of déjà vu this magazine offers is one of the reasons its name is so appropriate.

Short List—**MARILYN BRIDGES,** International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. (open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8, through Sept. 2); **HELEN CHADWICK,** Burden, 20 E. 23rd St. (opens at noon Tuesdays through Saturdays, through Aug. 11); **JOHN MAGGIOTTO,** Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. (closed Mondays, through July 27); **LINNAEUS TRIPE** and **SUZANNE OPTON,** Lowinsky, 584 Broadway (closed Mondays, open Saturdays, through Aug. 18); **FÉLIX TEYNARD,** Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45, through Sept. 9).

MUSIC

SOMEONE has compared Berlioz's "Faust" composition to reading Goethe by flashes of lightning. Schumann's is more like reading him by a melancholy, dwindling candle. The two composers worked on the intractable subject at roughly the same time; each spent years on it (though nothing like the nearly sixty that Goethe spent on the play), revising and reworking. And each stopped short of operatic treatment: Berlioz's "Damnation of Faust" and Schumann's "Scenes from Faust" both take the form of episodic concert works, not quite oratorios but not constructed for the stage. Berlioz began in 1828 with eight embryonic scenes, some piano-accompanied (three years later, the young Wagner produced a similar series, but never returned to it), and finished in 1846 with the work we know today. Schumann began the "Scenes" only in 1844, but had included Faust references in compositions as far back as 1832; he finished with an overture in 1853, the year before his mental breakdown, and never regarded the group of compositions as a unified work. "At the most it might be done only as a curiosity," he said. It was not done whole until six years after his death.

Berlioz's "Faust" is full of fire, sudden drama, orchestral brilliance, ecstatic lyrical contemplation, and sardonic Mephistophelian wit; it is performed regularly and was at one time the composer's most popular work. Schumann was drawn to piteous and mystical scenes; he delved farther than other composers into the densities of Goethe's Part Two, included none of the comic songs, passed up most of the moments of high drama. No other composer has found music for the Four Gray Women (Want, Debt, Care, and Need); none other until Mahler, in his "Symphony of a Thousand," ventured sounds for the final scene. Schumann's is not a score for every season, but pages of it speak with a deep, sad eloquence. John Nelson led a performance in protest-filled Leipzig shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall. He will do it again, with the East German Faust (Egbert Junghanns) he found there, at the Caramoor Festival on July 21. The work is a rarity, not likely to turn up again soon (the last performances hereabouts seem to have been about twenty-five years ago), and very much worth hearing.

IN TOWN

Mostly Mozart Festival—July 16 at 8: Flutist Jean-Pierre Rampal, pianist John Steele Ritter, and the Mendelssohn String Quartet, in a program of Haydn, Mozart, Boccherini, and Friedrich Kuhlau. . . . ¶ July 17-18 at 8: Cecilia Bartoli, mezzo-soprano, sings Mozart and Rossini; Mr. Rampal offers a Pleyel concerto; and Gerard Schwarz and the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra perform symphonies by Mozart and Vanhal. . . . ¶ July 19 at 8: The Tokyo String Quartet, clarinettist Richard Stoltzman, and classical guitarist Kazuhito Yamashita play Mozart, Boccherini, and Beethoven. . . . ¶ July 20-21 at 8: Vladimir Feltsman plays Mozart's Piano Concerto in C Minor, K. 491, and Mischa Maisky performs Tchaikovsky's "Variations on a Rococo Theme," in a program that also includes orchestral music by Haydn and Mozart. Mark Elder conducts the festival orchestra. . . . ¶ July 23 at 8: The Emerson String Quartet is joined by Carol Wincenc, flute, and Misha Dichter, piano, in a concert of Mozart, Schumann, and Dvořák. . . . ¶ July 24-25 at 8: Mozart's Piano Concerto in E-flat, K. 482 (with Barry Douglas), his Clarinet Concerto (with Richard Stoltzman), and works of Haydn and Rossini, with Mark Elder leading the festival orchestra. (Avery Fisher Hall. 874-2424.)

Annapolis Brass Quintet—This nineteen-year-old ensemble plays German baroque music, transcriptions of Brahms motets, a Victor Ewald quintet from the early twentieth century, and New York premières of recent works by Elam Sprenkle, Walter Ross, and Allen Molineux. (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. July 18 at 5:45.)

Bargemusic—Piano music of Liszt, played by Ick-Choo Moon, who is joined by cellist Nathaniel Rosen for Schubert's "Arpeggione" Sonata, and by Mr. Rosen and violinist Christiaan Bor for Shostakovich's Piano Trio in E Minor. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. July 19 and 20 at 7:30 and July 22 at 4.)

Oleh Krysa—Violin, with Tatyana Tchekina, piano, performing Beethoven, Prokofiev, and Ravel. (Damrosch Park, Lincoln Center. July 24 at 7. No tickets necessary.)

John Walker—Organ, plays a recital that includes Bach's Fantasy and Fugue in G Minor and Franck's "Grande Pièce Symphonique" on the Aeolian-Skinner instrument at Riverside Church, where he serves as director of music. (Riverside Dr. at 120th St. July 24 at 7. Admission by contribution.)

OUT OF TOWN

Tanglewood—July 17 at 8:30: Light classics and popular favorites from the Boston Pops and conductor John Williams. . . . ¶ July 19 at 8:30: Mirella Freni, soprano, and Nicolai Ghiaurov, bass, sing Russian and Italian songs and arias. . . . ¶ July 20 at 9: Pascal Verrot leads the Boston Symphony in Kodály's "Dances of Galánta" and Saint-Saëns's "Organ" Symphony, and is joined by Alicia de Larrocha for Mozart's Piano Concerto in C Major, K. 503. . . . ¶ July 21 at 8:30: The Boston Symphony, with conductor Hans Vonk, in music by Schumann, Otto Ketting, and Max Bruch (his "Scottish Fantasy," with violinist Anne Akiko Meyers). . . . ¶ July 22 at 2:30: The Boston Symphony is conducted by Lukas Foss, who also performs as pianist in Bach's F-Minor Concerto, BWV 1056. The program also includes Handel arias (sung by mezzo-soprano Marilyn Horne), and Stravinsky's "Pulcinella" (with Ms. Horne, tenor Jon Garrison, and baritone Kevin McMillan.) (Lenox, Mass. For information about tickets, call 1-413 637-1940.)

Caramoor Music Festival—July 19 at 4:15: The St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble, with guest harpist Deborah Hoffman, in music by Mozart, Ravel, Heinrich Baermann, and Bruce Adolphe. . . . ¶ July 20 at 9: Daming Zhu, piano, in a recital of Bach/Busoni, Beethoven, and Chopin. . . . ¶ July 21 at 8: Robert Schumann's "Scenes from Goethe's 'Faust' " receives a rare performance by the Orchestra of St. Luke's, the Greenwich Choral Society, and nine soloists (including soprano Christine Brewer, baritone Egbert Junghanns, and bass John Cheek); directed by John Nelson. . . . ¶ July 22 at 5:30: The Emerson String Quartet, with flutist Carol Wincenc, plays Mozart and Dvořák. (Katonah, N.Y. Buses for Caramoor will be at the Katonah station to meet trains leaving Grand Central on Saturdays at 2:50 and 5:30, and Sundays at 2:50. For information about tickets and trains, call 1-914 232-1252.)

Norfolk Chamber Music Festival—July 20 at 8:30: Mozart's Divertimento, K. 563, and Brahms's Clarinet Quintet, played by the Cassatt String Quartet and guests. . . . ¶ July 21 at 8:30: Renaissance and baroque music, including antiphonal pieces for brass ensemble and Bach's Fifth Brandenburg Concerto. (Route 44, Norfolk, Conn. For information about tickets, call 1-203 542-5537.)

Waterloo Festival Orchestra—Gerard Schwarz conducts music by Brahms, Prokofiev, and Leon Kirchner, as well as Vincent D'Indy's "Symphony on a French Mountain Air," with pianist Grant Johannesen. (Waterloo Village, Stanhope, N.J. 1-201 347-4700. July 21 at 8:30.)

JAZZ / POP / ROCK PERSONAL APPEARANCES

Robert Plant—Plant's new LP, "Manic Nirvana," as well as his previous, "Now and Zen," prove that both his art and his sense of humor are kicking. The albums are not so much produced as assembled around a great chassis (Plant's power-hungry wail); they are state-of-the-art studio riots. (The sheer loudness of "Manic Nirvana" alone rivals anything heard at a Dolby Sensurround sixplex.) In a performance heavy with Zen atmosphere, Plant and his vibrant, piston-pumping band (particularly Phil Johnstone on keyboards) will play those grungy riffs, chant some choruses, and levitate the house. (Meadowlands Arena. 1-201 935-3900. July 19 at 8:30.)

Fleetwood Mac—With the departure of Lindsey Buckingham from the lineup, Fleetwood Mac has lost the Beach Boys-like precision harmonies that have colored some of the best-known songs. Their new album, "Behind the Mask," has a few good tracks (mostly written by the high priestess of diaphanous rock—Stevie Nicks), but it sounds mighty dull in comparison to their earlier work. Still, their songs have aged well, and a soft, misty chorus of oohs and ahs can sound pleasant to cooing couples. One of the best bands in the world, Squeeze, opens. (Meadowlands Arena. July 24 at 8.)

Preservation Hall Jazz Band—Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. July 17 at 8.

Palladium—Two concerts. July 16 at 10: Queen Latifah and A Tribe Called Quest. . . . ¶ July 17 at 10: Peter Murphy. (126 E. 14th St. 473-7171.)

"Jazz In July"—July 17: The 92nd Street Y Stompers (Doc Cheatham, Marty Grosz, Major Holley, and Dick Hyman) and the Jim Cullum Jazz Band. . . . ¶ July 18: Adam Makowicz, Ralph Sutton, Dick Hyman, Oliver Jones, and others. . . . ¶ July 19: Bucky Pizzarelli, Warren Vaché, Sandy Stewart, and Dick Hyman, along with various sons, daughters, and one son-in-law, in a program called "All in the Family." . . . ¶ July 24: "Brilliant Corners: Thelonious Monk and Alec Wilder," with the Tommy Flanagan trio and the Big Apple Octet. . . . ¶ July 25: Vince Giordano and the Nighthawks and the Manhattan Rhythm Kings in a salute to big bands of the twenties and thirties. . . . ¶ July 26: Walt Levinsky and the Great American Band in another big-band tribute, this one featuring the music of Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw, Glenn Miller, and others. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440. Evenings at 8.)

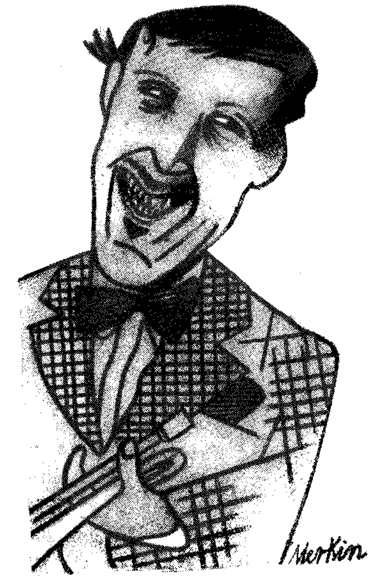
SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Mets—Vs. the Atlanta Braves, July 19-20 at 7:35, July 21 at 7:05, and July 22 at 1:35.

Yankees—Vs. the Kansas City Royals, July 16-17 at 7:30, and July 18 at 1.

(Home base for the Mets is Shea Stadium, 1-718 507-8499; and for the Yankees, Yankee Stadium, 293-6000.)



"Jazz in July": Doc Cheatham . . .

RACING

Horses—At Belmont: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 1. The Brooklyn Handicap is on July 21. Through July 30. . . . At Monmouth Park, Oceanport, N.J.: Weekdays at 1:30. . . . At the Atlantic City Race Course: Mondays and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 7:25. . . . **TROTTING** at Yonkers Raceway: Weeknights at 8, and Tuesdays at 1. . . . At the Meadowlands: Weeknights at 7:30. Through Aug. 18. . . . At Saratoga Raceway, Saratoga Springs: Mondays through Saturdays at 7:45.

THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Daylily Weekend—The Stout Daylily Garden is the centerpiece of this two-day event. Blooming in the garden (named for Arlow B. Stout, a pioneer hybridizer) are thousands of daylilies of every variety. The weekend culminates in a concert, by the Goldman Memorial Band, of flower-inspired musical works on July 22 at 3:30. (New York Botanical Garden, Bronx Park. 220-8777. July 21-22, from 10 to 5.)

New Kids on the Block—Don't lock up your daughters. "A lot of people associate musicians with drugs, and craziness, and being bad people," says Jon, the Kid who looks a little like an androgynous teen-age Robert De Niro. "But that's not what we want to be with this group." When would these five cute white boys who sound black find the time to be bad? They've spent the past two years doing more than a hundred photo sessions, three hundred interviews, and an average of one concert every other day. (By the way, Danny is the one with the Rasputin stare and the Travolta smile, Jordan kind of looks like a very young Tony Curtis, Donnie is husky and squints like Clint Eastwood, and Joe is pretty in a pleasant, faintly insolent, pubescent-Elvis way.) (Giants Stadium, the Meadowlands. 1-201 935-3900. July 20 at 7:30 and July 21 at 7. . . . ¶ Jones Beach Theatre. July 22-23 at 8. For information about tickets, call 1-516 221-1000.)

PROSPECTORS

The eleven-day annual fishing contest that A&S sponsors for children in Brooklyn's Prospect Park is a hard way to win a hundred dollars. Hundreds of children will line the banks of Prospect Lake once again this week, hoping to hook one of the two prize carp that are ceremoniously tossed in on the contest's opening day (July 17). One is tagged with an "A," for Mr. Abraham, the other with an "S," for Mr. Straus. If you catch either fish, and you're under sixteen, you win a hundred-dollar gift certificate to the department store. It's not an easy thing to accomplish, however.

Kevin Jeffrey, who was recently named Chief of Operations at Prospect Park, fished in the competition many times as a boy, in the late sixties and early seventies. He can recall only one time in those years when a tagged fish was actually caught. After the annual contest, Jeffrey and his family usually left town for a two-week camping trip. While they were away, the Parks Department would send out notices to the children who had caught the biggest bass, the most fish, and so on. Jeffrey remembers many a long ride home spent wondering whether a letter would be waiting for him. He did receive several, and over the years was awarded various rods, reels, and tackle boxes—the same sort that children will be given this year for feats such as catching the largest sunfish. If nobody reels in a tagged carp, the grand prize goes to the child who snares the biggest fish. Now that Jeffrey is in charge, he gives everyone a dollop of his own home recipe for cornmeal carp bait. Apparently, carp love the vanilla extract in it—but probably not enough to help some kid win a hundred bucks.

Gil Scott-Heron—A "Musicruise" concert on a Circle Line boat. (Pier 81, Twelfth Ave. at 41st St. July 20; boarding starts at 7 and 9:30. For information about tickets, call 956-5550.)

Anita Baker—Jones Beach Theatre. July 20-21 at 8.

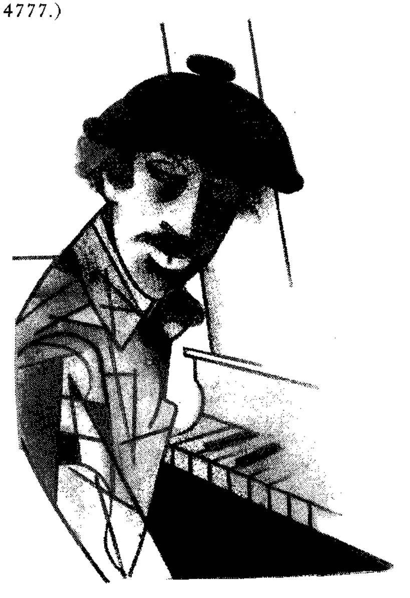
World Financial Center—July 18 at 7:30: The Duke Ellington orchestra. . . . ¶ July 25 at 7:30: The Artie Shaw orchestra. (Battery Park City. No tickets necessary.)

"Midsummer Night Swing"—Evenings of swing dancing by the fountain in Lincoln Center Plaza. July 18: The Jim Cullum Jazz Band. . . . ¶ July 19: The J. B. Horns and Yvonne Jackson. . . . ¶ July 20: Panama Francis and his Savoy Sultans. . . . ¶ July 21: Grover Mitchell and his orchestra. (Evenings at 9. Admission at the gate on the nights of the dances.)

South Street Seaport—July 19 at 6:30: Youssou N'Dour. . . . ¶ July 21 at 8: The Paragon Ragtime Orchestra and the Jack Reilly quartet. . . . ¶ July 25 at 6:30: Their first single, "Come and Get These Memories," was released in 1963, and **MARTHA REEVES & THE VANDELLAS** more than delivered on that offer over the next decade, with songs like "Heat Wave," "Jimmy Mack," "Nowhere to Run," and that great summer song with perhaps the biggest Big Beat of all, "Dancing in the Street." It still doesn't matter what you wear, just as long as you are there. (Pier 16, East River at Fulton St. No tickets necessary. For information about rain dates, call 669-9424.)

Central Park Summerstage—July 19 at 7:30: Vincent La Selva conducts the New York Grand Opera in a production of "Rigoletto." . . . ¶ July 20 at 8:30: Lawrence Ferlinghetti will read from his own poetry, and Mark Bingham will play with his band. . . . ¶ July 21 at 3: "Poi dog" is Hawaiian slang for "mutt" (three of the guys in this group are veterans of the Honolulu punk scene), and **POI DOG PONDERING** has more influences than a junk-yard dog has breeds. Their sound is suffused with the spirit of street-corner busking and neo-hippie optimism; wear blue-jeans, sandals, and a tie-dyed shirt, and you'll fit right in. With Baby Flamehead. . . . ¶ July 22 at 3: Ivo Papasov & his Bulgarian Wedding Band, and the Klezmatics. (Rumsey Playground, mid-Park at 72nd St. No tickets necessary. For rain-date information, call 360-2777.)

Pier 84—July 21 at 7:30: Exposé, with the Jets. . . . ¶ July 24 at 7:30: Bad Company, with Damn Yankees. (Twelfth Ave. at 43rd St. For information about tickets, call 247-4777.)



and Tommy Flanagan

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

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FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 15.

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "Jesus of Montreal" (directed by Denys Arcand; in French), with Lothaire Bluteau.
Theatre 2: "The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover" (†).
Theatre 3: Through July 19: "RoboCop 2" (Irvin Kershner), with Peter Weller and Nancy Allen. From July 20: "The Unbelievable Truth" (Hal Hartley), with Robert Burke, Adrienne Shelly, and Christopher Cooke.
Theatre 4: "Without You I'm Nothing" (John Boskovich), with Sandra Bernhard.
Theatre 5: "How to Make Love to a Negro Without Getting Tired" (Jacques W. Benoit; in French), with Isaach De Bankolé.
Theatre 6: "Quick Change" (Howard Franklin and Bill Murray), with Murray, Geena Davis, Randy Quaid, and Jason Robards.

Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
July 17: (Separate admissions) "The Cassandra Cat" (1963, Vojtech Jasny; a Czech film); "La Grande Illusion" (1937, Jean Renoir; in French), with Erich von Stroheim, Jean Gabin, Pierre Fresnay, and Marcel Dalio; and "The Rules of the Game" (1939, Renoir; in French), with Marcel Dalio and Nora Gregor.
July 18-19: (Separate admissions) "The Cassandra Cat"; "La Fille de l'Eau" (1924, Jean Renoir; silent), with Catherine Hessling; "Charleston" (1927, Renoir; silent); "A Day in the Country" (1937, Renoir; in French), with Jeanne Marken and Sylvia Bataille; and "La Chienne" (1931, Renoir; in French), with Michel Simon, Jamie Marèze, and Georges Flamant.
July 20-21: (Separate admissions) "The Cassandra Cat"; "Eléna et les Hommes" (†); and "The Little Theatre of Jean Renoir" (1969, Jean Renoir; in French), with Jeanne Moreau, Françoise Arnoul, and Fernand Sardou.
July 22 and 24: (Separate admissions) "The Cassandra Cat"; "French Cancan" (1954, Jean Renoir; in French), with Jean Gabin, Maria Felix, Françoise Arnoul, and Edith Piaf; and "The River" (1951, Renoir), with Nora Swinburne, Arthur Shields, Radha, Esmond Knight, and Adrienne Corri.
From July 25: (Separate admissions) "The Cassandra Cat"; "The Elusive Corporal" (1962, Jean Renoir; in French), with Jean-Pierre Cassel and Claude Brasseur; and "Picnic on the Grass" (†).

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "Total Recall" (†).
Theatre 2: "Days of Thunder" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Adventures of Ford Fairlane" (Renny Harlin), with Andrew Dice Clay, Wayne Newton, Priscilla Presley, and Ed O'Neill.

Bijou Cinema, 3rd Ave. between 12th and 13th. (505-7320)
"Die Hard 2" (Renny Harlin), with Bruce Willis, Bonnie Bedelia, William Sadler, John Amos, and Fred Dalton Thompson.

Loews 19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "Days of Thunder" (†).
Theatre 2: "Total Recall" (†).
Theatre 3: "Ghost" (Jerry Zucker), with Patrick Swayze, Demi Moore, Whoopi Goldberg, and Tony Goldwyn.
Theatre 4: "RoboCop 2" (Irvin Kershner), with Peter Weller and Nancy Allen.
Theatre 5: Through July 19: "Betsy's Wedding" (Alan Alda), with Alda, Madeline Kahn, Joe Pesci, and Molly Ringwald. From July 20: "Navy SEALs" (Lewis Teague), with Charlie Sheen and Michael Biehn.
Theatre 6: Through July 17: "Another 48 Hrs." (Walter Hill), with Eddie Murphy, Nick Nolte, Brion James, Ed O'Ross, Bernie Casey, and Tisha Campbell. From July 18: "Arachnophobia" (Frank Marshall), with Jeff Daniels, Julian Sands, Harley Jane Kozak, and John Goodman.

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
"Dick Tracy" (†).

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"Die Hard 2" (Renny Harlin), with Bruce Willis.

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Ghost" (Jerry Zucker), with Patrick Swayze, Demi Moore, Whoopi Goldberg, and Tony Goldwyn.
Theatre 2: "Days of Thunder" (†).
Theatre 3: "Another 48 Hrs." (Walter Hill), with Eddie Murphy, Nick Nolte, Brion James, Ed O'Ross, Bernie Casey, and Tisha Campbell.

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"The Adventures of Ford Fairlane" (Renny Harlin), with Andrew Dice Clay, Wayne Newton, Priscilla Presley, and Ed O'Neill.

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
Through July 19: "Longtime Companion" (†).
From July 20: "The Unbelievable Truth" (Hal Hartley), with Robert Burke, Adrienne Shelly, and Christopher Cooke.

Sutton 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: "Pretty Woman" (†).
Theatre 2: Through July 17: "Gremlins 2 The New Batch" (†). From July 18: "Arachnophobia" (Frank Marshall), with Jeff Daniels, Julian Sands, Harley Jane Kozak, and John Goodman.

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"The Adventures of Ford Fairlane" (Renny Harlin), with Andrew Dice Clay, Wayne Newton, Priscilla Presley, and Ed O'Neill.

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"The Misadventures of Mr. Wilt" (Michael Tuchner), with Mel Smith and Griff Rhys Jones.

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "Days of Thunder" (†).
Theatre 2: "Days of Thunder" (†).

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"Back to the Future Part III" (†).

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Die Hard 2" (Renny Harlin), with Bruce Willis, Bonnie Bedelia, William Sadler, John Amos, Dennis Franz, and Fred Dalton Thompson.
Theatre 2: "Die Hard 2."

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "Dick Tracy" (†).
Theatre 2: "Quick Change" (Howard Franklin and Bill Murray), with Murray, Geena Davis, Randy Quaid, and Jason Robards.
Theatre 3: "The Jungle Book" (1967), a full-length Walt Disney cartoon.

Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "Total Recall" (†).
Theatre 2: Through July 19: "Jetsons: The Movie" (William Hanna and Joseph Barbera), an animated film. From July 20: "The Freshman" (Andrew Bergman), with Matthew Broderick and Marlon Brando.

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"Ghost Dad" (Sidney Poitier), with Bill Cosby.

Loews New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: Through July 19: "Another 48 Hrs." (Walter Hill), with Eddie Murphy, Nick Nolte, Brion James, Ed O'Ross, Bernie Casey, and Tisha Campbell. From July 20: "Navy SEALs" (Lewis Teague), with Charlie Sheen and Michael Biehn.
Theatre 2: "RoboCop 2" (Irvin Kershner), with Peter Weller and Nancy Allen.

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Betsy's Wedding" (Alan Alda), with Alda, Madeline Kahn, Joe Pesci, and Molly Ringwald.

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Ghost" (Jerry Zucker), with Patrick Swayze, Demi Moore, Whoopi Goldberg, and Tony Goldwyn.

U. A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Days of Thunder" (†).

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "The Adventures of Ford Fairlane" (Renny Harlin), with Andrew Dice Clay, Wayne Newton, Priscilla Presley, and Ed O'Neill.
Theatre 2: "Die Hard 2" (Renny Harlin), with Bruce Willis, Bonnie Bedelia, William Sadler, John Amos, Dennis Franz, and Fred Dalton Thompson.

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "Quick Change" (Howard Franklin and Bill Murray), with Murray, Geena Davis, Randy Quaid, and Jason Robards.
Theatre 2: Through July 17: "Dick Tracy" (†). From July 18: "Arachnophobia" (Frank Marshall), with Jeff Daniels, Julian Sands, Harley Jane Kozak, and John Goodman.

WEST SIDE

Bleecker Street Cinema 1 and 2, 144 Bleecker St. (674-2560)
Theatre 1: Through July 19: "Monsieur Hire" (directed by Patrice Leconte; in French), with Michel Blanc and Sandrine Bonnaire. . . . ¶ July 20-22: "Fox and His Friends" (1976, Rainer Werner Fassbinder; in German) . . . ¶ July 23-24: "The Stationmaster's Wife" (1977, Fassbinder; in German), with Kurt Raab. . . . ¶ From July 25: "The Merchant of Four Seasons" (1971, Fassbinder; in German), with Hans Hirschmuller.
Theatre 2: "The Big Dis" (Gordon Eriksen and John O'Brien).

Waverly 1 and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "Another 48 Hrs." (Walter Hill), with Eddie Murphy, Nick Nolte, Brion James, Ed O'Ross, Bernie Casey, and Tisha Campbell.
Theatre 2: "Die Hard 2" (Renny Harlin), with Bruce Willis, Bonnie Bedelia, William Sadler, John Amos, Dennis Franz, and Fred Dalton Thompson.

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)
Through July 17: "Pretty Woman" (†).
From July 18: "Arachnophobia" (Frank Marshall), with Jeff Daniels, Julian Sands, Harley Jane Kozak, and John Goodman.

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: (Matinées only) "Jetsons: The Movie" (William Hanna and Joseph Barbera), an animated film; and (evenings only) "Ghost Dad" (Sidney Poitier), with Bill Cosby.
Theatre 2: "Ghost" (Jerry Zucker), with Patrick Swayze, Demi Moore, Whoopi Goldberg, and Tony Goldwyn.

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Dick Tracy" (†).
Theatre 2: "Dick Tracy" (†).
Theatre 3: "Cinema Paradiso" (Giuseppe Tornatore; in Italian), with Philippe Noiret and Salvatore Cascio.
Theatre 4: (Matinées only) "The Jungle Book" (1967), a full-length Walt Disney cartoon; and (evenings only) "Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!" (†).

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "Ghost Dad" (Sidney Poitier), with Bill Cosby.
Theatre 2: "Gremlins 2 The New Batch" (†).
Theatre 3: "Back to the Future Part III" (†).
Theatre 4: "Die Hard 2" (Renny Harlin), with Bruce Willis, Bonnie Bedelia, William Sadler, John Amos, Dennis Franz, and Fred Dalton Thompson.
Theatre 5: "Die Hard 2."
Theatre 6: "Longtime Companion" (†).
Theatre 7: "Quick Change" (Howard Franklin and Bill Murray), with Murray, Geena Davis, Randy Quaid, and Jason Robards.
Theatre 8: "The Adventures of Ford Fairlane" (Renny Harlin), with Andrew Dice Clay, Wayne Newton, Priscilla Presley, and Ed O'Neill.
Theatre 9: "The Adventures of Ford Fairlane."

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "The Jungle Book" (1967), a full-length Walt Disney cartoon.
Theatre 2: "Pretty Woman" (†).
Theatre 3: "Jetsons: The Movie" (William Hanna and Joseph Barbera), an animated film.

MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"Jungle Book" (1967), a full-length Walt Disney cartoon.

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "Ghost Dad" (Sidney Poitier), with Bill Cosby.
Theatre 2: "The Adventures of Ford Fairlane" (Renny Harlin), with Andrew Dice Clay, Wayne Newton, Priscilla Presley, and Ed O'Neill.
Theatre 3: "Betsy's Wedding" (Alan Alda), with Alda, Madeline Kahn, Joe Pesci, and Molly Ringwald.
Theatre 4: "Jetsons: The Movie" (William Hanna and Joseph Barbera), an animated film.
Theatre 5: (Matinées only) "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles" (†); and (evenings only) "The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover" (†).
Theatre 6: "Pretty Woman" (†).

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"Days of Thunder" (†).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"Betsy's Wedding" (Alan Alda), with Alda, Madeline Kahn, Joe Pesci, and Molly Ringwald.

Carnegie Hall Cinema, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
"Longtime Companion" (†).

Carnegie Screening Room, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (757-2131)
Through July 19: "Monsieur Hire" (Patrice Leconte; in French), with Michel Blanc and Sandrine Bonnaire.
From July 20: "Jesus of Montreal" (Denys Arcand; *in French), with Lothaire Bluteau.*

Paris, 4 W. 58th. (688-2013)
"Life Is a Long Quiet River" (Etienne Chatiliez; in French).

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Jetsons: The Movie" (William Hanna and Joseph Barbera), an animated film.

Loews Paramount, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"Ghost" (Jerry Zucker), with Patrick Swayze, Demi Moore, Whoopi Goldberg, and Tony Goldwyn.

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
"The Adventures of Ford Fairlane" (Renny Harlin), with Andrew Dice Clay, Wayne Newton, Priscilla Presley, and Ed O'Neill.

Lincoln Plaza 1, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!" (†).
Theatre 2: "Cinema Paradiso" (Giuseppe Tornatore; in Italian), with Philippe Noiret and Salvatore Cascio.
Theatre 3: "May Fools" (†).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"Total Recall" (†).

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: Through July 17: "Gremlins 2 The New Batch" (†). From July 18: "Arachnophobia" (Frank Marshall), with Jeff Daniels, Julian Sands, Harley Jane Kozak, and John Goodman.
Theatre 2: Through July 19: "Another 48 Hrs." (Walter Hill), with Eddie Murphy, Nick Nolte, Brion James, Ed O'Ross, Bernie Casey, and Tisha Campbell. From July 20: "The Freshman" (Andrew Bergman), with Matthew Broderick and Marlon Brando.
Theatre 3: "Dick Tracy" (†).
Theatre 4: "Quick Change" (Howard Franklin and Bill Murray), with Murray, Geena Davis, Randy Quaid, and Jason Robards.
Theatre 5: "Days of Thunder" (†).
Theatre 6: Through July 19: "RoboCop 2" (Irvin Kershner), with Peter Weller and Nancy Allen. From July 20: "Navy SEALs" (Lewis Teague), with Charlie Sheen and Michael Biehn.

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: (Matinées only) "Jetsons: The Movie" (William Hanna and Joseph Barbera), an animated film; and "Ghost Dad" *(Sidney Poitier), with Bill Cosby.*
Theatre 2: (Matinées only) "The Jungle Book" (1967), a full-length Walt Disney cartoon; and (evenings only) "Pretty Woman" (†).

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "Die Hard 2" (Renny Harlin), with Bruce Willis, Bonnie Bedelia, William Sadler, John Amos, Dennis Franz, and Fred Dalton Thompson.
Theatre 2: "Die Hard 2."

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "Total Recall" (†).
Theatre 2: "Gremlins 2 The New Batch" (†).
Theatre 3: "Gremlins 2 The New Batch" (†).
Theatre 4: "Die Hard 2" (directed by Renny Harlin), with Bruce Willis.
Theatre 5: "Die Hard 2."
Theatre 6: "Total Recall" (†).

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
"Dick Tracy" (†).

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, *7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)*
Theatre 2: Through July 17: "RoboCop 2" (Irvin Kershner), with Peter Weller and Nancy Allen. From July 18: "Arachnophobia" (Frank Marshall), with Jeff Daniels, Julian Sands, Harley Jane Kozak, and John Goodman.
Theatre 3: Through July 19: "RoboCop 2." From July 20: "Navy SEALs" (Lewis Teague), with Charlie Sheen and Michael Biehn.
Theatre 4: "RoboCop 2."

Loews Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"Another 48 Hrs." (Walter Hill), with Eddie Murphy and Nick Nolte.

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "The Adventures of Ford Fairlane" (Renny Harlin), with Andrew Dice Clay.
Theatre 2: "Ghost Dad" (Sidney Poitier), with Bill Cosby.

West Side Cinema 1 and 2, 7th Ave. at 48th. (398-1720)
Theatre 1: "Quick Change" (Howard Franklin and Bill Murray), with Murray, Geena Davis, Randy Quaid, and Jason Robards.
Theatre 2: "The Jungle Book" (1967), a full-length Walt Disney cartoon.

REVIVAL HOUSES

Biograph Cinema, 225 W. 57th. (582-4582)
July 16: "Ladies of Leisure" (1930, directed by Frank Capra), with Barbara Stanwyck, Ralph Graves, Marie Prevost, and Lowell Sherman; "Night Nurse" (1931, William Wellman), with Stanwyck, Clark Gable, Ben Lyon, and Joan Blondell; and "Ten Cents a Dance" (1931, Lionel Barrymore), with Stanwyck and Ricardo Cortez.
July 17-18: "Kid Galahad" (1937, Michael Curtiz), with Bette Davis, Edward G. Robinson, Wayne Morris, Humphrey Bogart, and Jane Bryan; and "His Brother's Wife" (1936, W. S. Van Dyke II), with Barbara Stanwyck and Robert Taylor.
July 19-21: "The Lady Eve" (†); and "Double Indemnity" (1944, Billy Wilder), with Barbara Stanwyck, Fred MacMurray, and Edward G. Robinson.
July 22-23: "Dr. Ehrlich's Magic Bullet" (1940, William Dieterle), with Edward G. Robinson; and "Our Vines Have Tender Grapes" (1945, Roy Rowland), with Robinson, Margaret O'Brien, James Craig, and Agnes Moorehead.
July 24-25: "Annie Oakley" (†); and "Banjo on My Knee" (1936, John Cromwell), with Barbara Stanwyck, Joel McCrea, Walter Brennan, Buddy Ebsen, and Tony Martin.

Cinema Village, 22 W. 12th. (924-3363)
Through July 17: "Dr. No" (1963, Terence Young) and "From Russia with Love" (1964, Young), both with Sean Connery as James Bond.
July 18-19: "There's No Business Like Show Business" (1954, Walter Lang), with Ethel Merman, Marilyn Monroe, Dan Dailey, Donald O'Connor, Johnnie Ray, and Mitzi Gaynor; and "The Seven Year Itch" (1955, Billy Wilder), with Marilyn Monroe and Tom Ewell.
July 20-21: "Manhattan" (1979, Woody Allen), with Allen, Diane Keaton, Michael Murphy, and Meryl Streep; and "Annie Hall" (1977, Allen), with Allen and Keaton.
July 22: "The Gospel According to St. Matthew" (†); and "Accattone!" (1961, Pier Paolo Pasolini; in Italian).
July 23-24: "Tucker: The Man and His Dream" (1988, Francis Ford Coppola), with Jeff Bridges, Joan Allen, Martin Landau, and Frederic Forrest; and "The Betsy" (1978, Daniel Petrie), with Laurence Olivier, Robert Duvall, Katharine Ross, Tommy Lee Jones, and Paul Rudd.
From July 25: "Carnival of Souls" (1962, Herk Harvey); and "The Haunting" (†).

Thalia SoHo, 15 Vandam St. (675-0498)
Through July 17: "What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?" (1962, Robert Aldrich), with Bette Davis and Joan Crawford; and "Hush . . . Hush, Sweet Charlotte" (1965, Aldrich), with Davis, Olivia de Havilland, and Joseph Cotten.
July 18-19: "Wild Strawberries" (1957, *Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish), with* Victor Sjöström and Ingrid Thulin; and "One Summer of Happiness" (1955, Arne Mattsson; in Swedish), with Ulla Jacobsson and Folke Sundquist.
July 20-21: "The Rules of the Game" (1939, Jean Renoir; in French), with Marcel Dalio and Nora Gregor; and "La Grande Illusion" (1937, Renoir; in French), with Erich von Stroheim, Jean Gabin, Pierre Fresnay, and Dalio.
July 22: "Hamlet" (1948, Laurence Olivier), with Olivier, Jean Simmons, Basil Sydney, Eileen Herlie, and Stanley Holloway; and "Ophélia" (1962, Claude Chabrol; in French).
July 23-24: "Loves of a Blonde" (†); and "Sign of the Virgin" (1969, Zbynek Brynych; a Czech film).
From July 25: "Nuns on the Run" (†) and "Bedazzled" (†).

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
July 16: "L'Atalante" (1934, Jean Vigo; in French), with Michel Simon; and three short films by Vigo, all in French—"Taris" (1931), "Apropos de Nice" (1930), and "Zero for Conduct" (1933).
July 17: "Mean Streets" (1973, Martin Scorsese), with Robert De Niro, Harvey Keitel, and Amy Robinson; and "Bang the Drum Slowly" (1973, John Hancock), with Michael Moriarty and De Niro.
July 18: "The Hound of the Baskervilles" *(1939, Sidney Lanfield) and "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes"* (1939, Alfred L. Werker), both with Basil Rathbone as Sherlock Holmes and Nigel Bruce as Dr. Watson.
July 19: "Sweet Bird of Youth" (†); and "This Property Is Condemned" (1966, Sydney Pollack), with Natalie Wood and Robert Redford.
July 20-21: "Rope" (1948, Alfred Hitchcock), with James Stewart, John Dall, and Farley Granger; and "The Man Who Knew Too Much" (1956, Hitchcock), with Stewart and Doris Day.
July 22: "Charade" (†); and "Arabesque" (1966, Stanley Donen), with Gregory Peck, Sophia Loren, and Alan Badel.
July 23: "Jean de Florette" (1985, Claude Berri; in French), with Yves Montand, Gérard Depardieu, Elisabeth Depardieu, and Daniele Auteuil; and "Manon of the Spring" (1987, Berri; in French), with Montand, Auteuil, and Emmanuelle Béart.
July 24: "Ninotchka" (†); and "Grand Hotel" (1932, Edmund Goulding), with Greta Garbo and John Barrymore.
July 25: "Murder in the Cathedral" (1952, George Hoellering), with Father John Grasner and Niall Mac Ginnis; and "Marat/Sade" (1967, Peter Brook), performed by the Royal Shakespeare Company.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)—July 16 at noon: "Life Begins at 8:30" (1942, directed by Irving Pichel), with Ida Lupino, Monty Woolley, and Cornel Wilde. . . . ¶ July 16 at 3: "Springtime in the Rockies" (1943, Irving Cummings), with Betty Grable, John Payne, Carmen Miranda, and Harry James and his band. . . . ¶ July 16 at 6: "Sun Valley Serenade" (1941, H. Bruce Humberstone), with Sonja Henie, John Payne, and the Nicholas Brothers. . . . ¶ July 17 at noon: "This Above All" (1942, Anatole Litvak), with Tyrone Power, Joan Fontaine, and Thomas Mitchell. . . . ¶ July 17 at 3: "Roxie Hart" (1942, William A. Wellman), with Ginger Rogers, Adolphe Menjou, and George Montgomery. . . . ¶ July 17 at 6: "Orchestra Wives" (1942, Archie Mayo), with George Montgomery, Ann Rutherford, and Glenn Miller and his band. . . . ¶ July 19 at noon: "Holy Matrimony" (1943, John M. Stahl), with Monty Woolley, Gracie Fields, and Laird Cregar. . . . ¶ July 19 at 3: "Blood and Sand" (1941, Rouben Mamoulian), with Tyrone Power, Rita Hayworth, Anthony Quinn, and Nazimova. . . . ¶ July 19 at 6: "Life Begins at 8:30." . . . ¶ July 20 at noon: "Lifeboat" (1944, Alfred Hitchcock), with Tallulah Bankhead, John Hodiak, and Walter Slezak. . . . ¶ July 20 at 3: "Guadalcanal Diary" (1943, Lewis Seiler), with Lloyd Nolan, Preston Foster, and Anthony Quinn.... ¶ July 20 at 6: "This Above All."... ¶ July 21 at noon: "Blood and Sand."... ¶ July 21 at 2:30: "Holy Matrimony."... ¶ July 21 at 5: "Laura" (1944, Otto Preminger), with Gene Tierney, Dana Andrews, and Clifton Webb.... ¶ July 22 at noon: "Winged Victory" (1944, George Cukor), with Lon McCallister, Edmond O'Brien, Jeanne Crain, and Judy Holliday.... ¶ July 22 at 2:30: "Guadalcanal Diary."... ¶ July 22 at 5: "Lifeboat."... ¶ July 23 at noon: "Laura." ... ¶ July 23 at 3: "Heaven Can Wait" (1943, Ernst Lubitsch), with Don Ameche, Gene Tierney, and Charles Coburn.... ¶ July 23 at 6: "Leave Her to Heaven" (1945, John M. Stahl), with Gene Tierney, Cornel Wilde, and Jeanne Crain.... ¶ July 24 at noon: "Fallen Angel" (1945, Otto Preminger), with Alice Faye, Dana Andrews, and Linda Darnell.... ¶ July 24 at 3: "Winged Victory."... ¶ July 24 at 6: "Hangover Square" (1945, John Brahm), with Laird Cregar, Linda Darnell, and George Sanders.

Museum of Broadcasting, 1 E. 53rd St. (752-7684)—"MB Playhouse," dramas shown on television over the past thirty years. July 17-21: Harold Pinter's "No Man's Land" (1980, Granada Television), with John Gielgud and Ralph Richardson.... From July 24: Samuel Beckett's "Happy Days" (1980, PBS), with Irene Worth. Showings Tuesdays at 3 and 6, Wednesdays through Fridays at 3, and Saturdays at 1.... ¶ "The Reiner Moritz Collection." July 17-21: "Michael Powell" (1986, David Hinton), a documentary. Showings Tuesday at 2 and 6:30 and Wednesday through Saturday at 2.... July 17-21: "Agnes de Mille" (1983, Alan Benson), a documentary. Showings Tuesday through Saturday at 3:15.... From July 24: "Eric Clapton" (1987, Chris Hunt), a documentary. Showings Tuesday at 2 and 6:30 and Wednesday through Saturday at 2.... From July 24: "Lester Young" (1985, John Jeremy), a documentary. Showings Tuesday through Saturday at 3:15.... ¶ "Rocky and Bullwinkle and Friends: A Tribute to Jay Ward." July 17-21: Episodes of "Crusader Rabbit."... From July 24: Three original Bullwinkle programs—"Goof Gas," "Moosylvania," and "Mucho Loma." Showings Tuesdays at 3, 5, and 6:30 and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 3.

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—July 18 at 12:30 and 6: "The Crime of Monsieur Lange" (1935, Jean Renoir; in French), with René Lefèvre, Jules Berry, Florelle, and Nadia Sibirskaïa.... ¶ July 18 at 3:15 and 8:45: "Daybreak" (1939, Marcel Carné; in French), with Jean Gabin, Jules Berry, Arletty, and Jacqueline Laurent.... ¶ July 25 at 12:30 and 6: "Four Bags Full" (†).... ¶ July 25 at 3:15 and 8:45: "Rendezvous with Tomorrow" (1949, Jacques Becker; in French), with Daniel Gélin, Nicole Courcel, Maurice Ronet, and Brigitte Auber.

Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (570-3949)—July 20 at 7: "The Innocent" (1976, Luchino Visconti; in Italian), with Giancarlo Giannini, Laura Antonelli, and Jennifer O'Neill.... ¶ July 21 at 4 and 6:30: "Ceddo" (1977, Ousmane Sembène; a Senegalese film, in Wolof).... ¶ July 21 at 7: "Yojimbo" (1961, Akira Kurosawa; in Japanese), with Toshiro Mifune.

Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. (662-2133)—July 18 at 8: "Lilac Time" (1928, Jacques Feyder; silent), with Gary Cooper and Colleen Moore.... ¶ July 25 at 8: "Nosferatu" (1922, F. W. Murnau; silent), with Max Schreck. Organ accompaniment written and directed by Lee Erwin.

Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., State Office Building, 163 W. 125th St. (873-5040)—July 20 at 1 and 4:20: "The Learning Tree" (1969, Gordon Parks), with Kyle Johnson, Estelle Evans, and Dick Ward; and "Sounder" (1972, Martin Ritt), with Cicely Tyson, Paul Winfield, Kevin Hooks, and Janet MacLachlan. ... ¶ July 20 at 6:30: "Superfly" (1972, Gordon Parks, Jr.), with Ron O'Neal, Carl Lee, and Julius Harris; and "Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song" (1973, Melvin Van Peebles), with Van Peebles, Mario Peebles, and John Amos.... ¶ July 21 at 1 and 3:40: "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" (1978, Fielder Cooke), with Esther Rolle, Diahann Carroll, Paul Benjamin, Madge St. Clair, and Roger Mosley; and "Fields of Endless Day" (1978, Terence MacCarthey-Filgate), with Lili Clark, Winston Sutton, and Ricardo Keens-Douglas.... ¶ July 21 at 6:30: "Heartland Reggae" (1983, John W. Mitchell), with Bob Marley and the Wailers and others; and "Soul to Soul" (1971, Denis Sanders), with the Ike & Tina Turner Revue and others.... ¶ July 22 at 2 and 5:10: "Amazing Grace" (1974, Stan Lathan) and "Boarding House Blues" (1948, Josh Binney), both with Jackie (Moms) Mabley.... ¶ July 22 at 7: "Sparkle" (1976, Sam O'Steen), with Irene Cora, Lonette McKee, Philip Michael Thomas, Mary Alice, and Dorian Haywood.

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

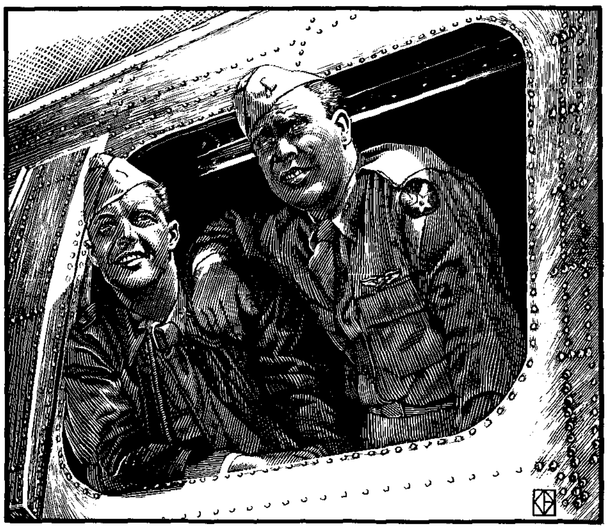
(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Terrence Rafferty.)

Annie Oakley (1935)—Barbara Stanwyck was an amazing vernacular actress. As the backwoods girl who joins Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show and becomes internationally famous for her marksmanship (and showmanship), she's consistently fresh and believable, and she brings a physical charge to the role. The film, directed by George Stevens, makes some of the points about race he made later in "Giant" (and that Arthur Penn made in "Little Big Man"), but here they're lighter and better. They seem to grow casually out of the American material; the movie feels almost improvised. (It covers much of the material that seems strained in the improvisational style of Robert Altman's 1976 "Buffalo Bill and the Indians.") The screenplay, by Joel Sayre and John Twist, from a story by Joseph A. Fields and Ewart Adamson, emphasizes Annie's instinctive unwillingness to humiliate the handsome World's Champion Sharpshooter (Preston Foster) by outshooting him. She settles for the title of the World's Greatest Woman Rifle Shot. (The movie makes the case that she's a realist even when she's in love—that she's a realist because she's so completely in love.) Maybe the cast intuitively responded to Stanwyck's talent: everyone in the Wild West troupe seems to know that Annie Oakley is no ordinary person. As for Preston Foster, he's blandly unexciting, yet he brings a masculine charm to his role. With Moroni Olsen as Buffalo Bill, Chief Thunder Bird as Sitting Bull, and Melvyn Douglas, Pert Kelton, and Andy Clyde.—P.K. (Biograph Cinema; July 24-25.)

Back to the Future Part III—The last installment of the "Back to the Future" series brings the story of the suburban kid Marty McFly (Michael J. Fox) and the mad inventor Doc Brown (Christopher Lloyd) to a graceful, almost leisurely conclusion. Most of the picture takes place in 1885, in the Old West, where the specially rigged DeLorean that has been whipping Marty and Doc back and forth in time runs out of gas. Stalled in a Western, these time travellers from the manic, jumped-up nineteen-eighties adjust their internal clocks and do what characters in Westerns do: they wait. The movie settles into a deliberate and rather soothing rhythm, as if the filmmakers—director Robert Zemeckis and writer Bob Gale—knew there was no point in getting themselves, and us, all het up. The relaxing light-vaudeville mood is a welcome break from the strenuous time-hopping of the first two installments. (It's poky, and it's also a touch boring.) While Zemeckis and Gale are biding their time, setting things up for their frantic grand finale, they keep us amused with an eccentric romance between Doc and a schoolmarm played by Mary Steenburgen. Lloyd and Steenburgen are hilariously well matched—they have perfectly compatible styles of celestial goofiness—and their moonbeam love story is the movie's one true inspiration. Also with Thomas F. Wilson.—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 6/18/90.) (59th Street East Cinema, and Chelsea Cinemas.)

Charade (1963)—A debonair macabre thriller—romantic, scary, satisfying. "How do you shave in there?" Audrey Hepburn asks, putting her finger up to the cleft in Cary Grant's chin. (She's trying to seduce a legend.) This piece of high-style kitsch, directed by Stanley Donen, from a smooth, smart script by Peter Stone and Marc Behm, is as enjoyable in its way as "The Big Sleep." (Yet it was widely panned when it came out; the mixed tones of comedy and grisliness seemed to offend the press.) The setting is Paris. Hepburn is a young widow who is stalked by the mourners at her husband's funeral. With Walter Matthau, and James Coburn, George Kennedy, and Ned Glass as scheming thugs. The score is by Henry Mancini; the cinematography is by Charles Lang, Jr.; Hepburn's clothes are by Givenchy.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; July 22.)

The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover—A movie about a crude British thug, Albert Spica (Michael Gambon), whose favorite method of terrorizing people is ramming things down their throats. Albert himself eats only haute cuisine; he and his wife (Helen Mirren) dine every night at a posh restaurant called Le Hollandais. This is an Art Movie, refined and terribly formal; the director, Peter Greenaway (who also wrote the script), places this barbarian smack in the middle of "painterly" compositions and encourages us to see him as a steaming hunk of offal desecrating the beauty of an artist's creation. He looks at Albert with the disdainful stare that the pukka sahib directs at a servant who has inconvenienced him. Greenaway, however, has a lot more in common with his loutish protagonist than he thinks. He obviously regards himself as an aesthetic virtuoso, but he's just a cultural omnivore. (He chews with his mouth open—we can identify almost every piece of art that has fed his imagination.) The only thing in this movie's tidy, hermetic universe that Greenaway is unable to control, or disguise with fancy brushwork, is his loathing of the body. The movie features several gross-out scenes, including a climactic act of cannibalism; the Motion Picture Association of America gave it an X rating. (The distributors released it unrated.) What's offensive about the picture, though, isn't its violence or its visceral shocks but the patrician arrogance, the smug aestheticism, the snobbishness that suffuse every frame. Greenaway is an intellectual bully: he pushes



At MOMA, Mark Daniels and Edmond O'Brien in "Winged Victory" us to the ground and kicks art in our faces. Also with Alan Howard (the Lover) and Richard Bohringer (the Cook). Cinematography by Sacha Vierny.—T.R. (5/7/90) (Angelika Film Center. . . . ¶ Worldwide Cinemas. Evenings only.)

Days of Thunder—This new Tom Cruise vehicle, directed by Tony Scott, is the latest example of the nearly demagogic brand of pop-culture uplift practiced by the producers Don Simpson and Jerry Bruckheimer. (They were also responsible for "Flashdance" and "Top Gun.") It's about winning, and nothing else. The setting this time is the stock-car racing circuit. The screenwriter, Robert Towne, seems to be trying to underplay the rah-rah elements of the material—to give competition some point other than pure ego gratification. And he supplies some nice dialogue: easy, natural-sounding macho banter among the drivers and their crews. But the movie has been stripped for speed: by the big race (the Daytona 500), all the ambiguities in the script have been removed, and there's nothing to interfere with Cruise's, and the producers', streak to the finish line. Like the previous Simpson-Bruckheimer pictures, it's designed—engineered, really—to give audiences an overdose of the thrill of victory; it wants us to jump out of our seats, pumping our fists in the air and roaring for the hero to pulverize his opponents. The racing sequences are very ordinary. Also with Robert Duvall, who gives a lively performance as the hero's mentor, and Michael Rooker, Nicole Kidman, Randy Quaid, and Cary Elwes. —T.R. (7/16/90) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Loews 19th Street East 6, Loews 34th Street Showplace, Manhattan Twin, U. A. East, Ziegfeld, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex.)

Dick Tracy—This isn't the kind of crass crowd-pleaser we've become accustomed to; its dullness is of the old-fashioned variety. Everything but the film's bold, striking comic-strip visual design (created by Richard Sylbert and photographed by Vittorio Storaro) is low-key. Warren Beatty directed and plays the title role. His performance is recessive almost to the point of perversity. In Chester Gould's comic strip, Dick Tracy always seemed like a tough, aggressive, no-nonsense guy; Beatty's Tracy is a ditherer. And his tentativeness as an actor here is matched by the dreamy, distracted quality of his direction. The picture has no drive; its style is less "Dick Tracy" than "Classics Illustrated." It's pleasant, lovingly detailed, and eye-filling. It's everything a movie can be except interesting. Some of the actors are fun to watch: Madonna, as Breathless Mahoney, vamps entertainingly; Glenne Headly does an expert spunky-gal turn as Tess Trueheart, the hero's long-suffering girlfriend; and Al Pacino, as a sleazy mobster named Big Boy Caprice, creates a memorable comic grotesque. Also with William Forsythe (Flattop), Dustin Hoffman (Mumbles), Mandy Patinkin (88 Keys), R. G. Armstrong (Pruneface), Paul Sorvino (Lips Manlis), Charlie Korsmo, Charles Durning, Estelle Parsons, Dick Van Dyke, and James Caan. Score by Danny Elfman; original songs by Stephen Sondheim.—T.R. (7/2/90) (Gramercy, Cinema I, Quad Cinema, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy. . . . ¶ 86th Street East Twin; through July 17.)

Elena et les Hommes (1956)—Jean Renoir made this love-carnival film, set in France in the eighteen-eighties, in color and with an expensive international cast—Ingrid Bergman, Mel Ferrer, and Jean Marais. The first American audiences couldn't judge it properly, because it was released here in a botched, dubbed version called "Paris Does Strange Things"; Marais spoke in a gravelly baritone so far from his own voice that people laughed. Ferrer seemed weak even for Ferrer, and the picture had little besides Bergman's astonishing, ripe beauty to recommend it. The French version has considerably more, although it is far from a success. With Pierre Bertin, Elina Labourdette, Magali Noel, Jean Richard, and Juliette Greco. Cinematography by Claude Renoir; music by Joseph Kosma. In French. —P.K. (Public Theatre; July 20-21.)

Four Bags Full (1957)—When Marcel Aymé's long short story was published in *Partisan Review*, it was called simply "Crossing Paris"; this explosively funny movie version, directed by Claude Autant-Lara, was known in England as "Pig Across Paris"; in the United States it was called "Four Bags Full," but was unknown under any title. Somehow it never caught on here. (It had won the award for best film of the year in France.) The period is the German Occupation: a petty, anxious black marketeer (Bourvil) hires a helper (Jean Gabin) for a night's work—transporting a slaughtered pig across Paris to a butcher in Montmartre. The helper, a famous painter who has taken on the job for the hell of it, has an uproarious night, teasing his dull companion, outwitting both the French police and the German soldiers. Bourvil was selected best actor at Venice for his performance, but the star of the film is Gabin, lusty and powerful as the man who enjoys life so much he can play games with it. In the middle of sordid little perils, the artist devises quick-witted solutions, and then howls with delight, "This pig's making a genius of me!" The contrast between him and the terrified, sweating fellow at his side makes you know you're watching a fable, but Autant-Lara shows class—he doesn't tie it with a ribbon and hand it to you. Screenplay by Jean Aurenche and Pierre Bost. In French —P.K. (Florence Gould Hall; July 25.)

If you see the 1967 movie "Bedazzled" after this year's "Nuns on the Run" (both play at the Thalia SoHo on July 25-26), you'll discover that the short history of male nuns in movies has already gone downhill. "Nuns on the Run" stars Eric Idle and Robbie Coltrane as thieves who impersonate nuns to escape the cops, a Chinese gang, and their own ruthless boss. Written and directed by Jonathan Lynn (best known for the sophisticated BBC series "Yes Minister" and "Yes Prime Minister"), it isn't an awful movie. It's simply a mild and derivative one, built on the comedy equivalent of landfill—one flimsy gag piled on top of another.

"Bedazzled," on the other hand, is a clever piece of "Beyond the Fringe"-type drollery, written by and starring those two Fringe lunatics Peter Cook and Dudley Moore. In this swingin'-England spoof of "Faust," Moore plays a short-order cook at Wimpy's who's smitten with waitress Eleanor Bron. Cook is the granny-glassed Satan who, for the price of Moore's soul, offers him seven wishes. Moore uses them to woo his Lady of the Cheeseburgers. The high point comes when Cook agrees to bond Moore and Bron spiritually—and turns them both into nuns. The sequence that ensues is an achingly funny mock romance—Bron falls in love with Moore but will never loosen her habit. It has uproarious "Fringe"-like touches, such as a portrait of the Sister Superior emblazoned with the slogan "BIG SISTER IS WATCHING YOU." It also has a tinge of the surreal: Moore's order initiates its nuns on trampolines, in honor of a not-yet-canonized saint who literally leaped to heaven. They venerate her "tremendous feat," Cook explains, pointing to a pair of giant boots. "Bedazzled" packs more laughs into one eight-minute convent sequence than "Nuns on the Run" tamps into its entire running time.

The Gospel According to St. Matthew (1964)—Pier Paolo Pasolini's interpretation features the rocky settings of Southern Italy, an eclectic score, and a rigid Jesus who demands obedience. Some find the slow rhythm fascinating, others think it punishing. (There's a funny description of the film in the opening pages of Iris Owens' novel "After Claude.") In Italian.—P.K. (Cinema Village; July 22.)

Gremlins 2 The New Batch—The director, Joe Dante, and his team (which includes the screenwriter Charlie Haas and the effects supervisor Rick Baker) have made a multi-million-dollar, special-effects-crammed picture that has the loose, improvisatory feel of the great Warner Brothers cartoons of the forties and fifties. They're fearless and indefatigable gagsters, and the movie is smarter, wilder, and more unfettered than the original "Gremlins" (1984). There's an ideal setting for the gremlins' rampaging consumption: they've been let loose in a state-of-the-art Manhattan office building and mall called the Clamp Centre (after Daniel Clamp, the egotistical developer who built it). This towering steel-and-glass wedge is a monument to the runaway acquisitiveness of the eighties, and by the time the little monsters have chomped and guzzled (and sung and danced) their way through its cheerless offices and boutiques, Dante and his collaborators have trashed—or at least lobbed spitballs at—quite a few of the most unattractive aspects of life in these United States. In its adolescent way, the movie's almost subversive: a high-spirited combination of Looney Tunes principles and Dante's own manic pop-culture-in-a-blender sensibility. Zach Galligan, Phoebe Cates, Dick Miller, and Jackie Joseph return from the first film. They're joined by John Glover, who plays Clamp as a doltish child; Haviland Morris, who is hilarious as an ambitious, fast-talking businesswoman named Marla; and the horror-movie veteran Christopher Lee, who plays Dr. Catheter, the director of a genetic-engineering laboratory. The animated pre-credit sequence, featuring Daffy Duck and Bugs Bunny, was written and directed by Chuck Jones.—T.R. (7/2/90) (Chelsea Cinemas, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Sutton, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex; through July 17.)

The Haunting (1963)—An elegantly sinister scare movie, literate and expensive (though basically a traditional ghost story), with those two fine actresses Claire Bloom and Julie Harris. As a Greenwich Village lesbian, Bloom plays a female variant of the role that would once have been assigned to Dwight Frye; Julie Harris is the chaste heroine, a post-Freudian version of those anemic virgins Helen Chandler used to play. This "old dark house" movie is set in a marvellous Victorian gothic pile in New England, and it's good fun. With Richard Johnson, Russ Tamblyn, Fay Compton, Valentine Dyall, Rosalie Crutchley, and Lois Maxwell. The director, Robert Wise, hadn't done a simple amusement like this since his youth; Nelson Gidding did the adaptation of the Shirley Jackson novel "The Haunting of Hill House." —P.K. (Cinema Village; starting July 25.)

The Lady Eve (1941)—A frivolous masterpiece. Like "Bringing Up Baby," "The Lady Eve" is a mixture of visual and verbal slapstick, and of high artifice and pratfalls. Barbara Stanwyck keeps sticking out a sensational leg, and Henry Fonda keeps tripping over it. She's a cardsharp, and he's a millionaire scientist who knows more about snakes than about women; neither performer has ever been funnier. The film, based on a story by Monckton Hoffe, and with screenplay and direction by Preston Sturges, is full of classic moments and classic lines; it represents the dizzy high point of Sturges's comedy writing. With Charles Coburn, Eugene Pallette, William Demarest, and Eric Blore. (Remade as a musical in 1956—"The Birds and the Bees.")—P.K. (Biograph Cinema; July 19-21.)

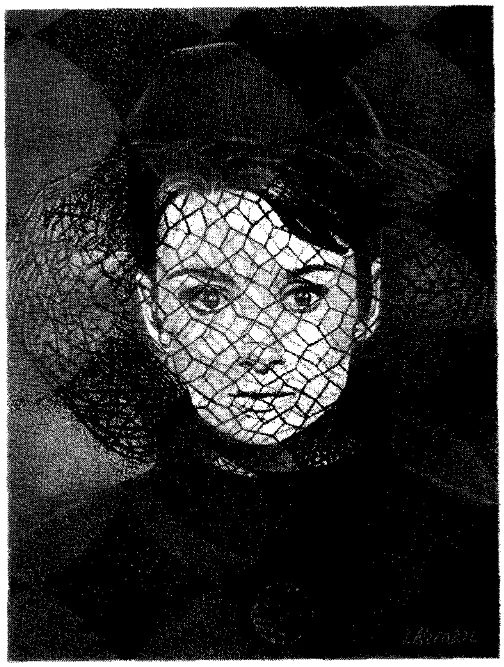
Longtime Companion—The screenwriter, Craig Lucas, and the director, Norman René, track the effects of AIDS on the lives of eight people: seven gay men and a straight woman who is a lifelong friend of one of the men. The filmmakers focus on one day in each year of the epidemic, from 1981 through 1989, and the mournful progress of the decade is expressed by the gaps between the annual episodes: the cast of characters keeps getting smaller, and at the end only the woman and three of the men are left. The movie is sometimes very effective, but it's often blander and more simplistic than it should be. It seems determined to convey a wholesome, "normal" image of gay life to straight America—so all its characters are pleasant and good-looking, and they're all white, too.

The only really interesting characters are a middle-aged couple, David (Bruce Davison) and Sean (Mark Lamos). The natural protagonist of the drama is David, who, when Sean gets sick, cares for him with extraordinary patience and tenderness. Davison's performance (in probably the best role he has ever had) is wonderfully dry and precise. There's a strange reserve in his demeanor even when he's being goofy, so the strength he shows at the bedside of his dying lover is both heartbreaking and absolutely convincing. It's a well-written role, and Davison does a beautiful piece of acting. After he, too, disappears—between episodes—the movie seems to have lost the best part of itself. Also with Campbell Scott, Stephen Caffrey, Patrick Cassidy, Mary-Louise Parker, John Dossett, and Dermot Mulroney.—T.R. (5/21/90) (Chelsea Cinemas, and Carnegie Hall Cinema. . . . ¶ Eastside Cinema; through July 19.)

Loves of a Blonde (1965)—A dreamily romantic young girl who is depressed and lost in her regimented factory milieu mistakes the casual interest of a young musician for a serious interest, and follows him to his home. The Miloš Forman picture is a comedy, and yet it's too painful and desolate to be funny; it reveals a horribly petty middle-class world within the Socialist economy. With Hana Brejchova and Vladimir Pucholt. In Czech.—P.K. (Thalia SoHo; July 23-24)

May Fools—Louis Malle's new film takes place in May, 1968, when, for a few chaotic weeks, French society seemed on the verge of remaking itself: students were rioting, workers were striking, and the country came to a standstill. The characters in this picture are far removed from the stirring street theatre of May, '68, but they're affected by it nonetheless. The setting is a shabby estate presided over by Milou (Michel Piccoli), a genial man in his sixties who lives the life of a lazy country sensualist: he keeps bees, browns in the sun, and gropes the housekeeper. On the sunny day when the story begins, his mother dies, and he summons the rest of the family for the funeral and the reading of the will. There's a sense that things are about to change, both on the large scale of French society and on the infinitely smaller one of Milou's life. Malle and his co-writer, Jean-Claude Carrière, use the upheaval of May, '68, very deftly: it intrudes on their comedy like distant thunder on a sunny day, but the threatened downpour of Meaning never develops—we get a cooling shower of light ironies instead. The movie's central joke is that its hero—this aging, apolitical landed gentleman—is in some sense an embodiment of the spirit of the time: not an enemy of the revolution but an unlikely comrade. Piccoli gives one of the best performances of his long career: he's vigorous and radiantly good-humored. Although its charm sometimes feels a bit too easy, the film is enjoyable throughout. It just bounces along to the rhythm of its remarkable score, composed and played by the eighty-two-year-old jazz violinist Stéphane Grappelli; the movie, like the music, has a delicate swing to it. Also with Miou-Miou, Michel Duchaussoy, Dominique Blanc, Harriet Walter, Renaud Danner, Rozenn Le Tallec, and Paulette Dubost. Cinematography by Renato Berta. In French.—T.R. (7/16/90) (Lincoln Plaza.)

Ninotchka (1939)—"Garbo Laughs," said the original ads, but there is by now a widespread story that when the time came for her laughing scene she pantomimed laughter beautifully, but no sound emerged; it was later provided by someone anonymous. The rest of her performance is her own—and she brings her incredible sensual abandon to the role of a glum, scientifically trained Bolshevik envoy who succumbs to Parisian freedom—i.e., champagne. The film includes a historic encounter, when the great instinctual artist of the screen meets the great stylist and technician of the stage—Ina Claire, as a Russian grand duchess. The fur flies exquisitely. Directed by Ernst Lubitsch, this light, satirical comedy has the nonchalance and the sophistication that were his trademark—but it also reveals that this time the trade marked him too high. There's an obviousness here; we can feel that we're being played down to. And there's a jeering cynicism built into the script: the Russians don't defect for freedom but for consumer goods. With Melvyn Douglas, Sig Rumann, Felix Bressart, Bela Lugosi, Alexander Granach, George Tobias, and Edwin Maxwell. Screenplay by Charles Brackett, Billy Wilder, and Walter Reisch, from a screen story by Melchior Lengyel. (The material is no more than a musical-comedy turn, which it became in the stage musical "Silk Stockings," filmed in 1957.)—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; July 24.)

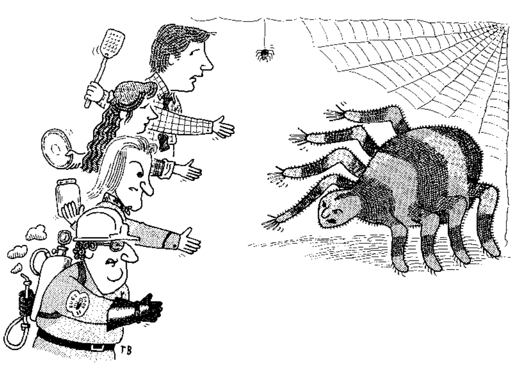


Audrey Hepburn in "Charade"

Picnic on the Grass (1959)—Jean Renoir, but at neither his best nor even his second best. His themes are reduced to crotchets in this story about a scientist (Paul Meurisse) who preaches artificial insemination until he catches sight of Catherine Rouvel bathing nude. Some sequences were filmed at Les Collettes, the home where Auguste Renoir spent his last years. Cinematography by Georges Leclerc; music by Joseph Kosma. In French. —P.K. (Public Theatre; starting July 25.)

Pretty Woman—The lovers in this romantic comedy, directed by Garry Marshall, are a long-legged, golden-hearted Hollywood Boulevard hooker (Julia Roberts) and a cold, suave corporate raider (Richard Gere). He buys her tasteful (expensive) clothes and shows her how to act "classy"; she opens—in order—his wallet, his fly, and his heart. The only real distinction of this long and rather uneventful diversion is the radical contrast between the stars' performing styles. Roberts is all ebullience and scattershot charm. The kind word for Gere's style is minimal. He's opaque, stubbornly remote; he seems to have faxed his performance in. At its worst, the movie is just unimaginative; at its best, it's pleasant and competent. It's business-as-usual entertainment.—T.R. (Sutton, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Worldwide Cinemas. . . . ¶ Metro Cinema. Evenings only. . . . ¶ 8th St. Playhouse; through July 17.)

Sweet Bird of Youth (1962)—Paul Newman as the gigolo Chance Wayne and Geraldine Page as the battered, fading star Alexandra Del Lago, in Richard Brooks' slicked-up version of Tennessee Williams' flamboyant pop fantasy. When Newman's bare chest isn't being fumbled at and crooned over by Page, it's being pawed and picked at by Shirley Knight, who plays his fresh-faced girlfriend, Heavenly Finley. This hysterical twaddle features a sadistic attack on Newman, engineered by Heavenly's father (Ed Begley), a crooked political boss, and a climactic telephone soliloquy by Page (we hear her part of a long-distance conversation with Walter Winchell, who convinces her that, far from being a flop in her last picture, she has scored her greatest hit). Rip Torn and Mildred Dunnock are also involved in the madness. —P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; July 19.)



John Goodman, Julian Sands, Harley Jane Kozak, and Jeff Daniels in "Arachnophobia"

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles—A tacky, lighthearted parody of crime-wave movies—camp for kiddies. As babies, the four turtles were let loose in radioactive muck; they mutated into hip, English-speaking people-size turtles who live in the dark sewers of New York City and send out for pizza. Their mentor, the wise old rat Splinter, has trained them in the martial arts, and they fight the criminal legions led by the Japanese, Darth Vader-like Shredder. Their human friends are the TV newswoman April O'Neil (Judith Hoag) and the daredevil Casey Jones (Elias Koteas). Everything in the movie has a playful, pop familiarity, and the jokey allusions to other movies are easy for young kids to grasp. The four turtles (stuntmen in getups devised by Jim Henson's Creature Shop) are not as individualized as one might hope, but Splinter has an Alice-in-Wonderland creepiness. The director, Steve Barron, is casual with Hoag and Koteas, who blend in gracefully; he can't do much for the preachy subplot involving a father and son who misunderstand each other. (The flashbacks are the most fun.) The story is based on the comic-book characters devised in 1983 by Peter Laird and Kevin Eastman.—P.K. (Worldwide Cinemas. Matinées only.)

Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!—Pedro Almodóvar's new movie gets off to a fast start, like a windup toy, but it runs out of momentum early, and Almodóvar can't figure out how to start it up again. The story, about a released mental patient (Antonio Banderas) who follows a sexy actress (Victoria Abril) and then takes her prisoner, seems to tie the director's wild imagination down, and his efforts to keep his (and the audience's) blood circulating betray some desperation. Neither the kidnapper's romantic obsession nor his captive's eventual love for him is especially convincing. And we don't fully enjoy the perverse humor of the situation, either: we've seen the victim subdued by a hard slap, and that image is too strong to forget. The limpness of "Tie Me Up!" suggests that Almodóvar is either a confused director or a tired one—probably a bit of both. It's as if he had made the movie solely to satisfy the public's demand for a new Almodóvar film. Also with Francisco Rabal, Loles Leon, and Lola Cardona. Screenplay by Almodóvar. In Spanish.—T.R. (5/7/90) (Lincoln Plaza. . . . ¶ Quad Cinema. Evenings only.)

Total Recall—This fifty-million dollar science-fiction thriller is full of relentless action and spectacular effects, and it's no fun at all. It's as heavy-spirited as its star, Arnold Schwarzenegger: imposing and implacable, like the killer robot Arnold played (or embodied) in "The Terminator." The script, by Ronald Shusett, Dan O'Bannon, and Gary Goldman, is based on a story by Philip K. Dick; the plot keeps twisting and turning, but we stop following it before the picture is half over. It's just a frame for meaty action sequences—a skeleton nestled deep inside ballooning muscles. The director, Paul Verhoeven ("RoboCop"), composes striking images, but they're oppressive and completely impersonal: every weird angle, every closeup of a face contorted with pain, every splash of bright-red blood is an effect borrowed from horror comics. The picture itself is a terminator: when it's over, you feel as if the life had been pounded out of you, and you never want to go to the movies again. Also with Sharon Stone, Ronny Cox, and Rachel Ticotin. Cinematography by Jost Vacano.—T.R. (6/18/90) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Loews 19th Street East 6, Gemini, Regency, and Criterion Center.)

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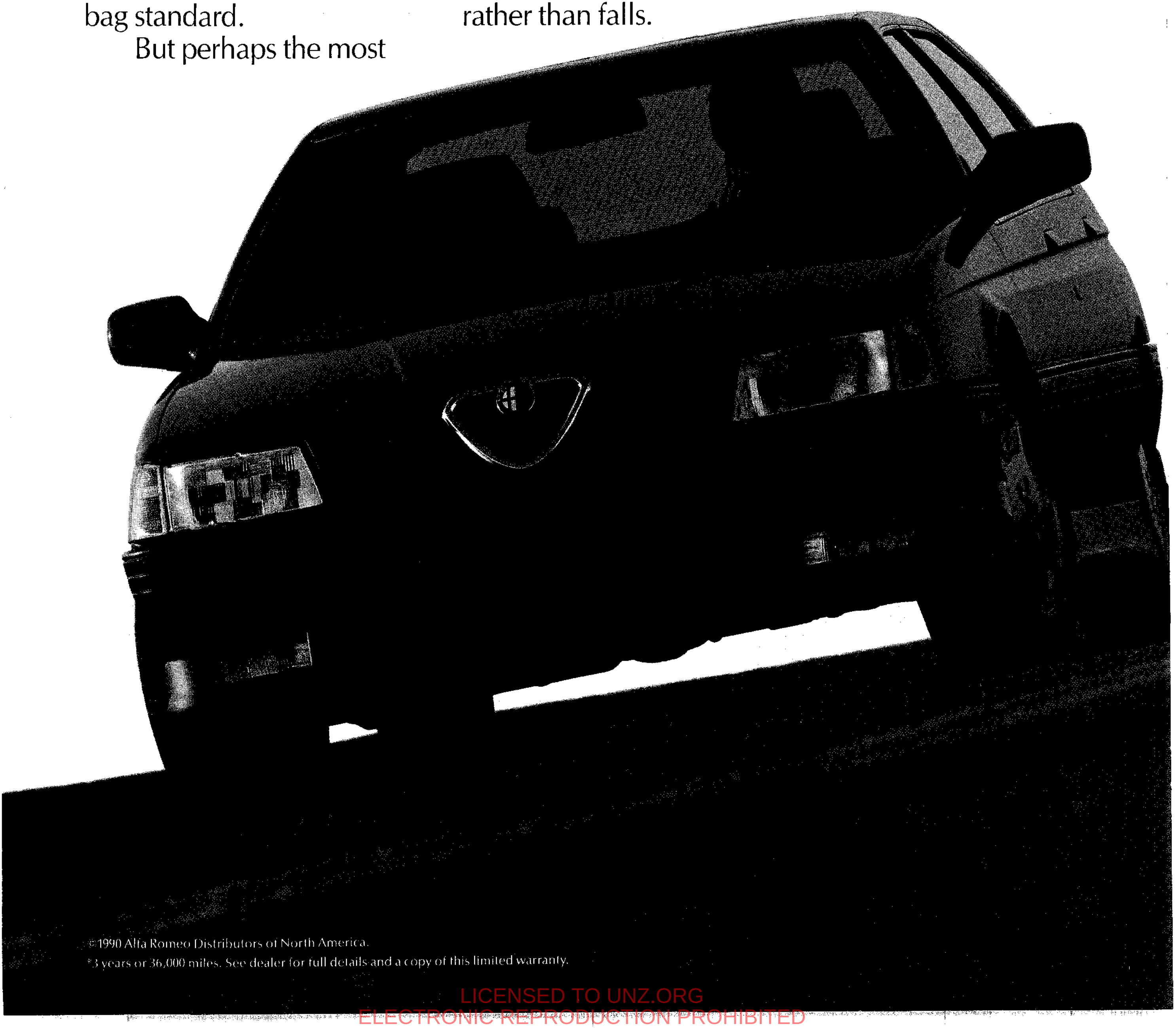

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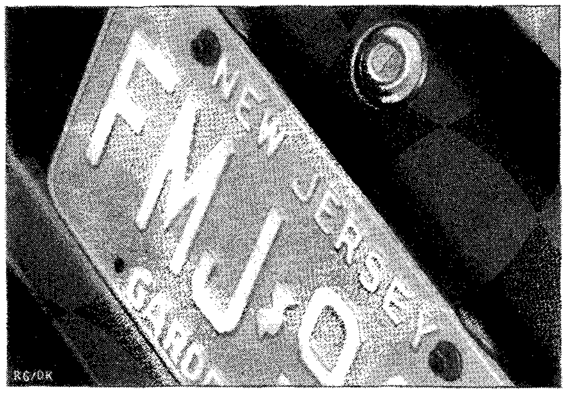
THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

THERE are a bewildering number of fronts and perimeters in the Bush Administration's "war on drugs." Progress is hard to measure. Arrests, seizures, and drug-related crimes can be totalled up, and yet the resulting figures produce only the sketchiest picture of the conflict, which is not military but essentially social, political, even philosophical. Recently, the one theme unifying the many simultaneous initiatives of our government's anti-drug offensive has seemed to be their atavism. Not only does the present campaign recall, in an uncanny variety of ways, earlier American temperance movements—including Prohibition—but the tactics and the language employed seem, more and more often, to echo other times, other crises, other unhappy national efforts. When President Bush agreed, in April, to send American military trainers to Peru to help fight the guerrillas in the coca-growing highlands, it inevitably brought to mind the first steps of our involvement in Vietnam. The rising enthusiasm for compulsory drug testing in areas where no clear risk to public safety exists, and the denial of work to those who refuse to be tested, together recall the loyalty investigations that scarred many American lives in the McCarthy era. Then, a few weeks ago, there was William Bennett, the Administration's anti-drug chief, predicting, in the *Times*, that the war on drugs would soon produce "a dramatic increase in orphanages."



RS/DK

What Mr. Bennett had in mind, it turned out, was a wholesale removal of children from their parents by the government. This notion—like the word "orphanages" itself—has a solidly nineteenth-century ring to it, and was, in fact, the guiding idea of a major reform movement in American cities during the Gilded Age. Michael B. Katz, in his 1986 book "In the Shadow of the Poorhouse: A Social History of Welfare in America," notes that in 1875 the New York State Legislature ordered the removal of all children between two and sixteen from poorhouses, and that in 1881 New York's county superintendents unanimously passed a resolution proposed by the superintendent of Queens County that "whenever families of children are likely to become pauperized by the dissipated habits of their parents . . . they use their best endeavors to have the children removed from those pernicious influences and placed in good, respectable families." The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, founded in 1874, had chapters in many cities and, according to Mr. Katz, concentrated its efforts on breaking up poor families, "encouraging neighbors to spy on and accuse one another." Among the poor in Philadelphia the society was known simply as "the Cruelty." Breaking up families was eventually discredited as a reform strategy, however, and the efficacy of orphanages—in 1890, New York City had forty-nine "homes," including the vast New York Catholic Protectory, which housed more than three thousand children—also came to be doubted.

Yet here orphanages are again, in the dark prophecy of William Bennett. Mr. Bennett, who says that "there are communities in America where children are not being raised at all," prefers to minimize any causal connection between poverty and drug abuse, but the communities he has in mind are poor ones. We called him recently to clarify this point, and he said that he wasn't really thinking of any specific "geographic" communities, but he went on to describe a series of visits to large public-housing projects as the inspiration for his views on the need for a new era of orphanages. Public-housing projects are, of course, the poorhouses of our time.

The more intractable the problems in our inner cities seem, the more sulfurous the rhetoric of our leaders becomes. President Bush has sworn to wage his war on drugs "neighborhood by neighborhood, block by block, child by child." Mr. Bennett has endorsed the idea of beheading drug dealers. (Here his imagery harks back to the *eighteenth* century.) Conservative politicians have always used the spectre of the great unwashed to frighten their constituencies, striking stern poses against the threat from the slums. Mr. Bennett, in the speech that included his remarks about orphanages, also said, "Sometimes you need Mother Teresa, and sometimes you need Dirty Harry," seemingly offering his own services in both roles.

Mr. Bennett is right, certainly, when he says, "Children cannot raise themselves," and no one doubts his concern for the welfare of children in dangerous, unhealthy homes and neighborhoods. His ideas, however, belong to an American tradition of authoritarian reform that has over the long run achieved very little. The authoritarian approach to problems is typically both paternalistic and punitive, and its reliance on criminalization and informers (our current anti-drug crusaders encourage children to inform on their parents) has tended to weaken the very social institutions it claims to want to save. Authoritarian reform is profoundly reactionary—that may help account for some of the antique oratory we hear today. These are not nineteenth-century problems we face, though, and, in any case, suggestions such as Mr. Bennett's are basically idle. Does anyone actually believe that we are about to see a dramatic increase in orphanages in this country? Who, for a start, would pay for them?

Earlier this month, the Low-Income Opportunity Board, an interagency group formed last year by the White House to develop new policy alternatives for fighting poverty, submitted a dozen proposals—including a "new block grant for investment in poor children" and federal supplements to child-support payments—that would extend concrete relief to poor families (and might also strike at some of the roots of drug abuse). The Bush Administration rejected all twelve. An official was quoted in the *Times* as saying, "It was fun to think about these things. But for the time being, we concluded that we don't want to do anything new." Another official described the Administration's plans for fighting poverty this way: "Keep playing with the same toys. But let's paint them a little shinier." As for the idea that the government should make a major new investment in children, the White House acknowledged, according to the *Times*, that such an investment "would have a big payoff for American society in the long run," but it "shelved the idea after concluding that it was 'not likely to show an immediate reward.' "

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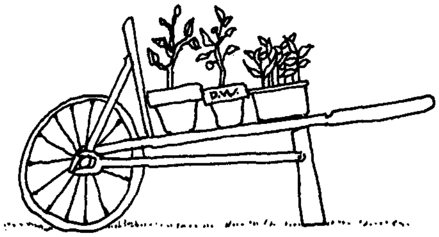
Stan and Babe

TO say that the Sons of the Desert enjoy Laurel and Hardy is like saying that they remember to breathe. It's not uncommon for them to honor their heroes by getting together and throwing pies, whacking little wooden projectiles called pee-wees, and demolishing pianos with sledgehammers. Last month, groups of them all over the country celebrated what would have been Stan Laurel's hundredth birthday, and they intend to keep the party going until Oliver Hardy's centennial, in 1992.

Before the birthday, we were briefed on Stan and Babe, as insiders know the pair, by Dwain Smith, a former president of the Sons of the Desert, who lives in Franklin Square. Mr. Smith is a genial, white-bearded man, and when he greeted us he was wearing a brass Laurel and Hardy belt buckle and a watch bearing the Sons of the Desert escutcheon: a snoozing lion and unicorn reposing against a shield emblazoned with two derbies, Stan's bow tie, and Babe's four-in-hand—all on top of an unfurled ribbon bearing the inscription "Duae tabulae rasae in quibus nihil scriptum est," or, loosely, "Two minds without a single thought."

"There was an element of sweetness and love to their comedy," Mr. Smith said. "Sure, they had pies in the face, they had violence, they were always falling off ladders, but they were always simpatico. And it's harmless comedy. Well, there *is* one where Oliver is dead at the end—'The Flying Deuces,' where he gets reincarnated as a horse. But generally, no matter what they go through, they come out happy, friendly, and in reasonably good shape, ready to start the next picture."

Mr. Smith led us into his Sons of the Desert Room, which is filled with Laurel and Hardy books, dolls, autographs, pictures, and statues, and we signed the guestbook, which came, he told us, from Stan's home, in Canoga Park, California. "I've got so many things," he said. "T-shirts, caps with Laurel and Hardy on them, a nightshirt, bikini underwear—not that I *wear* it." On one wall were maps festooned with pushpins indicating the whereabouts of a hundred or so "tents" that accommodate what are estimated to be nine thousand Sons in the United States and Europe. The names of the tents come from Laurel and Hardy films, Mr. Smith explained: a tent in a Connecticut prison used to be known as Pardon Us, a group of Illinois dentists calls itself the Fixer-Uppers, and so on. The name Sons of the Desert comes from the New York tent, which was organized in 1965; it memorializes a feature that depicted the boys in a fraternal organization of that title.



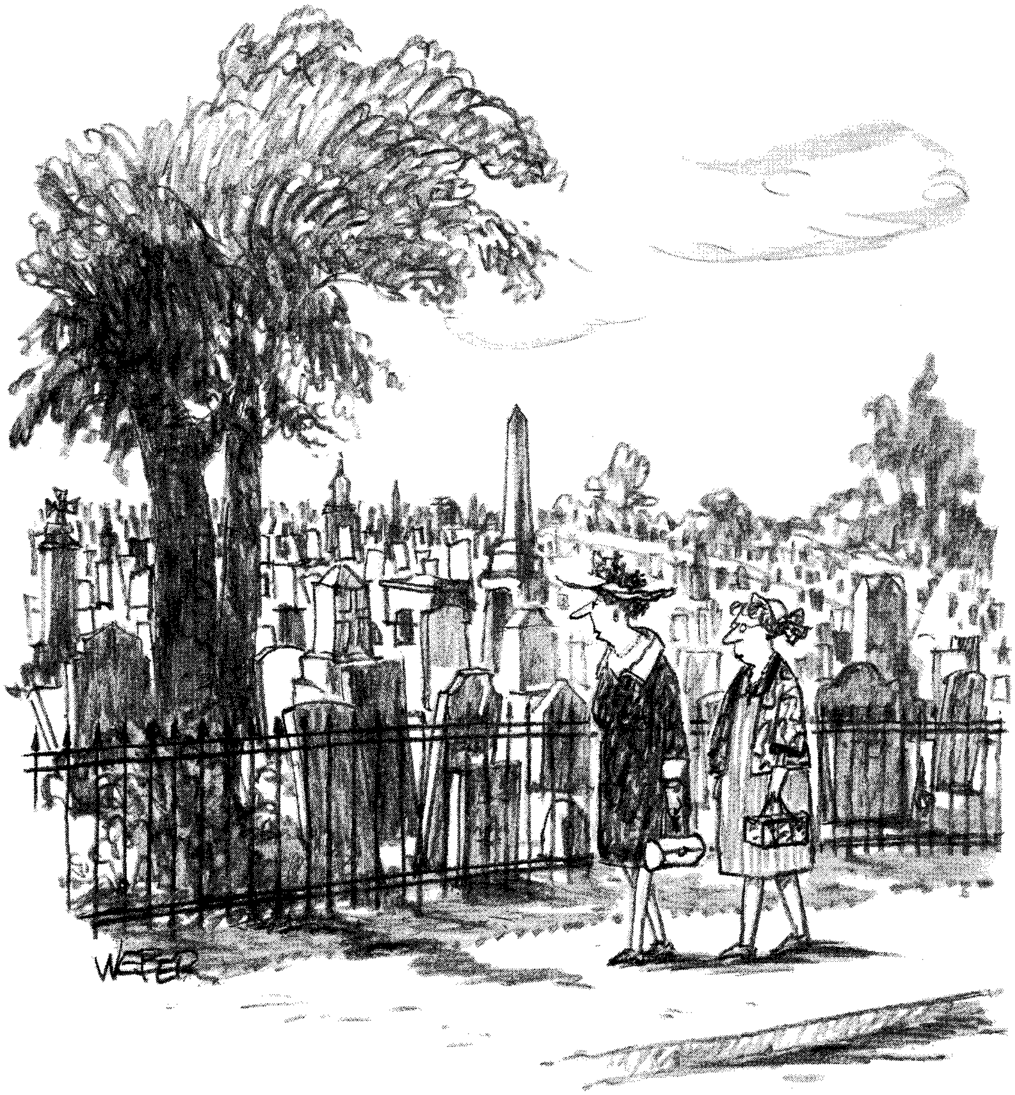
Our host vaporized a couple of myths for us. Laurel, the ostensible simpleton, was actually the creative genius behind the films; Hardy was just eager to finish work and get onto the golf course. And Clint Eastwood is *not* Stan Laurel's son. "It keeps popping up in these celebrity quiz things in the paper," he said. "I think somebody saw a picture of Clint Eastwood with his hair mussed up, and thought he looked like Stan, so 'Hey, maybe . . .' Bill Cubin, the former mayor of Ulverston, England—Stan's birthplace—fuelled this fire, because when he was asked what he thought, as an expert on Laurel and Hardy, he kind of hedged, and said, 'Well, you know, Stan was quite a man with the ladies,' leaving it open. Which is ridiculous."

On Stan's birthday eve, we attended the last Sons of the Desert meeting of the season, in the ballroom of the Doral Inn. The walls had been adorned with Laurel and Hardy posters, and Hal Roach music was welling from a tape player. Forty or fifty Sons were in attendance, a few wearing cone-shaped party hats. The current president, Ray Faiola, informed everyone that Sons of the Desert blazer patches were still available for eighteen dollars, and added, "Let me recommend that anyone who gets a blazer patch should set aside a *special* jacket."

As soon as all present had something to drink—the constitution calls for cocktails to be served nine times in the course of a meeting—ritual toasts were offered. "To Laurel, if not Hardy, but were it not for dear Babe, there would not be a party," one toaster said solemnly. Videos of three Laurel and Hardy films were raffled off, and then the revellers gathered around two cakes—one that looked like a derby, and the other a sheet cake decorated with Laurel's smiling face. "If Stan were here," somebody observed as the candles on the derby were lit, "he'd say the cake was on fire and throw water on it."

Amid the hubbub, Jack Roth, who is known as the Keeper of the Celluloid, was setting up a 16-mm. projector. Most tents watch videotape, he told us, but not this one. "Videotape is not archival," he explained. "Twenty years down the road, it has to be copied or transferred. It's a magnetic medium, and magnetism doesn't hold forever. Always remember this: motion-picture film has been around for a hundred years, while videotape is a new medium—thirty years tops. And the big screen is a factor, because when you see a movie with an audience, that's the way it was meant to be seen. Motion-picture film can last a lifetime. As long as there's motion-picture film, Laurel and Hardy will be here for the next hundred years."

The lights dimmed, and two men appeared on the flickering screen. One was a fat guy with a tiny mustache, and he was splashing around fully clothed in a river, trying to keep from drowning. His friend, a skinny, sorry-faced fellow, panicked and threw him an anchor.



"I hear Communism is dead."

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Homers

TWELVE years ago, an emaciated pigeon hit the roof of Chris and Willie Hongach's raised ranch house in La Grange, New York, just east of Poughkeepsie. The bird had an identification band on one leg, and when the Hongaches called its owner, in Enfield, Connecticut, he told them that it was a homing pigeon and would fly back to him if they let it go. They fed the pigeon and then threw it into the air, and watched it soar up and east. A month later, the bird returned, this time with a mate. Repudiating the wayward pair as deserters, the birds' owner told the Hongaches to keep them if they wanted them, and they did. They have bred pigeons ever since.

Almost every summer weekend, the Hongaches send twenty of their best birds to match speeds with hundreds of others, from the lofts of members of the Mid-Valley Racing Pigeon Club and the Danbury-Bethel Racing Pigeon Club. Each pigeon is banded with a numbered rubber cuff, known as a countermark, and then is loaded, with all the participating owners' entrants, in a specially outfitted truck and driven due west at least a hundred miles. On Saturday morning, the truck driver calls whichever club is sponsoring the race to get what is known as an authorization to liberate. If the weather is fair, the pigeons are released, and, at speeds of up to fifty miles per hour, they fly straight home—singly, in pairs, and in small groups, called stocks. As sure in its path as a bullet, a pigeon hellbent for home does not stop to drink or eat or rest. At the end of a six-hundred-mile race, what started out as a one-pound pigeon can have lost half its body weight. "You could slice bread with its keel bone when it returns," Mr. Hongach told us recently, holding out No. 509, a well-conditioned, ready-to-race champion hen, and inviting us to feel her breast. Under 509's smooth blue-gray feathers, the keel bone, bisecting her tiny chest, was barely discernible, enveloped in brawny tissue that felt like a pumped-up biceps or the flank of a racehorse.

Although stories of birds' intrepid flights over hundreds of miles are often exchanged by pigeon fanciers, the only part of a race the owners ever see is the finish. "Every Saturday afternoon, you know where to find us," Mrs. Hongach said. "We're leaning back in our lawn chairs, looking up and west." Homers are trained to go to a landing board that protrudes above the screened aviary of their loft. At the end of a long race, they are eager to hit the target, because that is where their water is. For the finish of a mere hundred-mile sprint, the Hongaches use a trick to make certain that the still energetic birds *don't circle idly before they land.* As soon as the first homers are spotted, high in the western sky, they throw a white fan-tailed pigeon into the air. The frilly-feathered fantail serves as what is called a drop bird: it never races but flies straight to the landing board, stands on its pink tiptoes, and flaps, attracting the homers. As in horse racing, every second counts. "I've lost a three-hundred-mile race by half a yard because my bird swooped instead of coming right in," Mr. Hongach said. As soon as a homer lands, he reaches up and retrieves the countermark from its leg, seals the band in a capsule, and drops the capsule into a time clock. At the end of the day, the pigeon fanciers take their clocks to the clubhouse, and the winners are determined.

Not all homing pigeons come home at the end of a race. Some lose their way if the weather turns bad, and a few become lunch for hawks. Occasionally, some go astray, confused by the flight patterns of pigeons on their way somewhere else, and wind up racing to lofts far away. The Hongaches have sometimes had prodigals return years after they disappeared. Just a month ago, 3737, who hadn't come back after a race in 1989, hit the lawn behind the house and fell over, too weak to fly up to the landing board. The Hongaches nursed him back to health, using a feed of maple peas, corn, rice, grit, barley, and vitamins, and they expect that he will be able to race next year. They have no idea where he spent the winter.

Homers compete in two categories: young birds, which are the year's hatchlings and are born between early February and late April, are raced from August through October; and old birds, between one and five years old are raced from April through June. Mrs. Hongach prefers racing old birds, because elaborate strategy is needed to take advantage of individual pigeons' personality traits. She said, "You've got to figure out what it is that makes a bird give that something extra."

Mr. Hongach uses bird psychology. Starting weeks before the first young-bird race, in August, he takes a chair out to the loft every evening and sits watching the hatchlings for hours, exercising what his wife calls his "fine pigeon eye" to spot the new talent. He looks for tight, close-together vent bones below the keel, which he believes keep the intestines from drooping during a long race. He scrutinizes the birds' eyes, because one theory has it that jagged circles around the pupils indicate more blood flowing to the brain, and thus a smarter bird. Most important, he studies the pigeons' temperaments. "I look for the ones that seem content," he said as he took us through the loft to point out some pigeons he is considering racing in August. "I want confidence and control, not aggression. A promising young homer glows with self-assurance. You can see it shine." Even in the old-bird loft, which includes some pigeons that have been retired from racing and are now strictly breeders, we could see what he meant. The winners radiated vigor, and their eyes were bright—except for one blind, very old bird, which doddered cheerfully on its perch, cooing like a mourning dove as others fluttered around it. This was the only pigeon in the loft to have a name instead of a number—the Hongaches' first bird, Enfield, now nineteen and retired to a life of good feed and happy memories of strong tail winds.

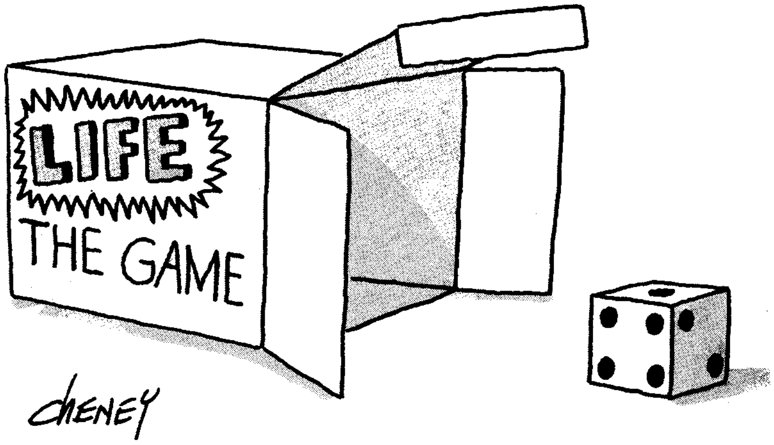
As chicks begin flying for fun around the Hongaches' house, they are taught to return only to the landing board. Gradually, their flights get higher and longer; in time, single birds form a stock; and one morning, without notice, the whole bunch flies the coop. Although the Hongaches know this routine well, they get anxious every time the stock disappears, and spend the day on their deck, waiting for it to return. Following that first adventurous expedition, the pigeons are ready for serious training. They are driven three miles from home, to the parking lot of a local shopping center, and released. Because they are immature and fancy-free, it may take them two hours to meander home. As they get older, stronger, and more purposeful, they are taken farther away, yet they fly home ever faster. By the end of July, when Mrs. Hongach is driving them fifty miles away for a training release, they can make the trip home faster than she can in her car. "They're at their water having drinks when I pull into the driveway," she said.

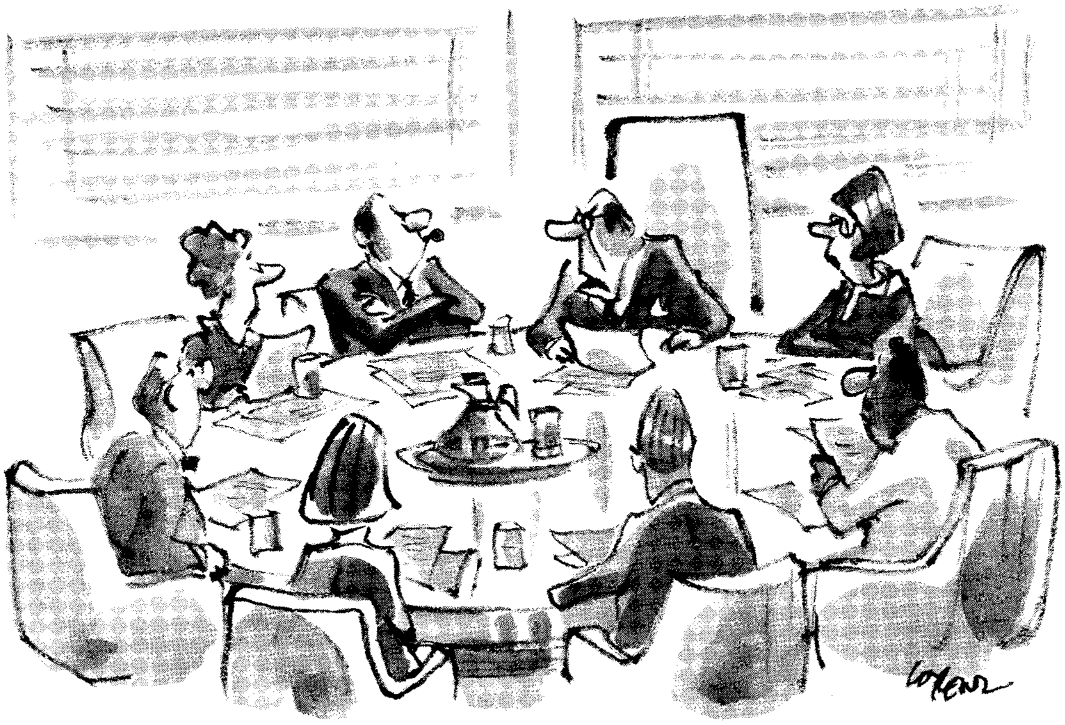
We asked Mr. Hongach if he could take a street pigeon and train it to be a champion homer. He scoffed at the idea. "Street pigeons couldn't find their way home from Poughkeepsie," he said. "They don't eat right, and they don't live right. They walk around in a daze all the time."

Artist

THE first question that people ask Hani Shihada, a Jordanian-American artist who draws copies of Michelangelo and Raphael in pastels on the pavement, is "What is it that you do?" The other afternoon, for instance, while Mr. Shihada was in the middle of his latest major work—a pavement triptych, at Sixty-fifth and Broadway, that included nearly life-size reproductions of two figures wakened by the Trumpet of Doom, from the "Last Judgment" wall of the Sistine Chapel; a macabre image of Death and Life, also from the "Last Judgment"; and four Muses from Raphael's "Parnassus"—a young woman deeply into lingerie dressing came up, said she was an art director, looked at his work, and then asked him what it was he did. "Are you an artist?" she said.

Without looking up (he was carefully laying down a striated pattern of dark blues, violets, and whites, which when the colors were rubbed together would represent the right sleeve on the cloak of Death), Mr.





"Damn it, Farrell, if you're going to blow the whistle, blow it!"

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Shihada said yes, he was an artist. The young woman asked, "Well, what *kind* of an artist are you?" Mr. Shihada explained that he was the kind of artist who draws copies of Michelangelo in pastels on the pavement of Manhattan. "Oh," she said, and then—perhaps thinking that she was being got at in some subtle way, but still determined to be *appreciative*—she asked him if he had a rep, or something, who might be able to show her some of his work.

"New York is a very strange place," Mr. Shihada said after she left. "If I am copying Michelangelo and Raphael on the pavement, it must be in order to draw attention to my own work, someplace else. I try to tell people, I do this in order to be doing it."

Mr. Shihada, who was born in Jerusalem and grew up in Jordan, began his career as a sidewalk artist in Perugia. "In Italy, this kind of art is a very old tradition," he said. "It was first done centuries ago by unfortunate people, without legs. They drew Madonnas of Raphael on the pavement, and they became known as *madonnari*. Now it is a profession, a métier. I tried first in Perugia—a Madonna of Raphael, very badly drawn. People encouraged me, however. Then I met an American girl, we were married, and I told her that I would continue my profession in New York. I drew my first work here in 1985—a Delphic Sibyl in Washington Square. I did well, and I have kept on. An Israeli artist named Dani showed me how to make my own pastels—that is my only expense. I have worked south as far as the World Trade Center, where I did a scene from the Creation, and north as far as the Bronx—two saints. Mostly, though, I do Sibyls and Prophets, Sibyls and Prophets, all over the West Side."

Mr. Shihada works from April to October every year. It takes him about five days to complete a major figure group. He uses black pastel to lay out the outlines of his figures, in a free, dancing hand, and then slowly fills in each area with stripes of pastel and smooths them together with his hand or a small piece of plastic foam so that the highlights merge fluidly into the surrounding colors. As he works, he glances at a collection of extreme-close-up black-and-white photographs of the Sistine Chapel from a book published in 1948. "It's good—the only useful book," Mr. Shihada says. "You can see the brushwork, the modelling." (Much of what looks like freehand, Expressionist inflection in his Sibyls and Prophets is in fact a faithful rendering of the outsize detail in the book.)

Since Mr. Shihada works from black-and-white photographs, he has to choose colors himself; he visited the Sistine Chapel once, eleven years ago, but he cannot remember all the colors in the frescoes. Generally, he chooses bright colors; the background of the figure blowing the Trumpet of Doom in the Broadway piece, for instance, is mixed orange and yellow. When Mr. Shihada began in New York, he received a certain amount of gentle, condescending advice from amateur art critics—they would suggest that his coloring was too bright. Then the Sistine Ceiling was cleaned. "I was not surprised," he says calmly. "Only timid, frightened men use dark colors. Michelangelo was not a timid and frightened man." Mr. Shihada is particularly proud of the deep look his pastels take on after a rainfall. His colors are not water soluble. "What happens when it rains?" is the second question everyone asks him.

Mr. Shihada makes a living from contributions that passersby throw in the tray where he keeps his pastels. His one regret is that he cannot often see his children—a boy and a girl. (He is divorced from his first wife.) They live upstate, and he draws every day, usually from 3 P.M. to 2 A.M. When his children visit, he takes them to museums, and he buys them toys. "The turtles. Ten dollars apiece: Raphael, Michelangelo . . ."

A man in an Italian-silk suit walks up and looks very carefully at Mr. Shihada's picture. He nods—a man who knows his Michelangelo. "What do you do? You're an artist?" he asks. Mr. Shihada nods. "Well, listen," the man says. "I have interests in some restaurants around here. They might not look bad with some decoration." Then, bending down and leaning over Mr. Shihada's shoulder, his shoes planted amid the heroic figures and only a couple of feet from the four beautiful Muses, the man says, "Not to put *pressure* on you, or anything, but you just might find it in your interest to let me have a look at some of your work."

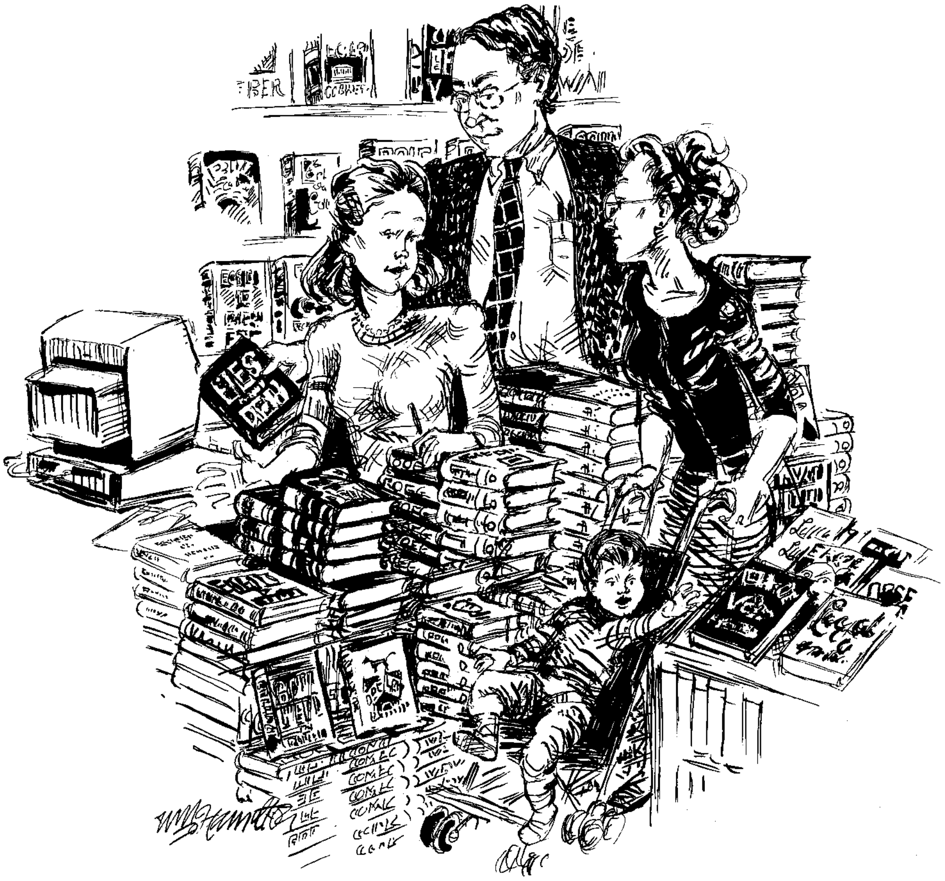
THE WOMAN LIT BY FIREFLIES

SHE had not yet accepted as real the quiver in her stomach and the slight green dot of pain in the middle of her head that signalled an incipient migraine. Her husband, on the car seat beside her, punched in a tape called "Tracking the Blues," which contained *no* black music but rather the witless drone of a weekly financial lecture sent from New York City. This particular tape was seven days stale and had been played three times on their trip, but Donald repeated it to get "fair value" for his money. The tape, not incidentally, replaced Stravinsky's "Histoire du Soldat" from an Iowa City FM station, a piece she always enjoyed.

"Do you mind, darling?" he asked.

"Not at all, dear," she replied, partly because the pain clinic she had attended in Arizona that spring had emphasized giving up resistance to outside phenomena at the possible onset of a migraine under the notion that you wanted to starve rather than feed the affliction. For instance, she shouldn't have been driving—sitting with her eyes closed listening to music would have been helpful, but she drove to avoid reading to him, which is what he required when he drove. An additional, insurmountable problem was that his car, an Audi 5000, was low-slung and the early August corn beside Interstate 80 in Iowa presented itself as a dense green wall. She preferred the higher vantage of her own nine-year-old Toyota Land Cruiser, a functional, clumsy old machine that she and her beloved friend Zilpha used on their outings—or so they called them—which were somewhat famous in their neighborhood, in Bloomfield Hills, a suburb of Detroit.

Clare would be fifty in another week; Donald was fifty-one and eager to get on with life, a matter about which she had mixed feelings. They had just been visiting their daughter, Laurel, who at twenty-seven was a veterinarian married to a veterinarian, the both of them ministering to horses and cattle in a clinic outside of Sioux City, Iowa, over by the Nebraska border. The visit had been cut short two days by a quarrel between Laurel and Donald. On the way home, they were to spend the weekend with Donald, Jr., who at twenty-five was a commodities-market whiz in Chicago.



"We thought about a restaurant and decided we were more of a bookstore."

"I love you, Mom, but I can't understand why you don't leave that asshole," Laurel had said.

"Please, Laurel, he's your father."

"In name only," she had replied, and then they kissed goodbye as they always did, Clare's heart giving a breathless wrench at separation.

A specific giddiness began to overtake her when she thought of the goodbye. *This is the way, after all, I've spent my life.* You could not fault Donald for being Donald any more than you could fault Laurel for being the same as she was at three years, a cantankerous little girl with a sure though general sense of mission, a personality so specific as to be sometimes offensive.

"The overloaded leverages are coming home to roost," Donald brayed, so loud that she applied the brakes. She quickly reset the cruise control at seventy—a modest speed, considering that most cars passed her. The week before at the club, she had attempted a witticism about how all the lives saved by Mothers Against Drunk Driving were being lost to the raising of the speed limit. The luncheon ladies were used to Clare and let the quip pass, but not a new member, who found it "dreadfully morbid." Suddenly it occurred to her that Donald didn't feel really good about making money unless others were losing theirs, which made it all, to her mind, a silly game to spend your life on rather than the grave process with which he was totally obsessed.

An ever-so-slight tremor of head pain made her dismiss the thought about Donald and money as true but banal. She forced her thoughts back to a pleasant morning with Laurel, spent hiking on some bluffs above the Missouri River. Laurel had discovered a rattlesnake that had difficulty getting out of their way because of a huge lump in its belly—no doubt, Laurel said, from swallowing a gopher. They both laughed when Laurel added, "Poor thing, also poor gopher." The laughter was nervous relief. The first hour of their walk had been spent lifting Clare's confusion over a pamphlet an antivivisectionist neighbor had given her concerning a doctor down South who, on a defense contract, had shot several thousand cats in the head for research. Laurel habitually defended the actions of the scientific community, but this one puzzled her, as the brain of a cat was dissimilar enough to that of a human to make the research appear useless. She did not tell Clare that it would have made more sense to shoot several thousand dogs, or better yet chimpanzees, though the latter were very expensive. The purpose of the research, of course, was to improve treatment of head wounds in soldiers. Then Clare had brought up another item that she had brooded about for two years without mentioning. Laurel had sent her an article from *Orion Nature Quarterly*, by a fellow named Lopez, called "The Passing Wisdom of Birds," in which the author described Cortés' vengeful burning of the aviaries in Mexico City in the sixteenth century. Clare loved birds and cats and could easily overlook the fact that Cortés had destroyed the city and murdered hundreds of thousands of citizens—that was to be expected—but the burning of Montezuma's aviaries seemed to stand for something far more grotesque and the image of the conflagration passed through her mind daily. So she had asked Laurel, a scant fifteen minutes before they saw the gorged rattlesnake, why she had sent the article, and Laurel had said, "People who love each other try to explain themselves to each other. I wanted you to see again why I work with animals. I can't stand people. Now it's your turn to explain yourself to me." That, as they say, was that, until the poor snake appeared as a convenience, almost a stage prop if it hadn't been for the immensity of the sky above and the wide, brown Missouri River below them.

"This happy breed of men, this little world, this blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this east end of Long Island!"

Back on Interstate 80, she wondered why anyone bothered to teach the things they did—the grandeur, sweep, and intricacies of civilization at its best—when there was little enough to do with the knowledge. Clare's criticisms of the human condition were sharp but basically midrange, and items like Cortés and the birds shifted her off balance, as did, to a lesser degree, the three thousand holes in the heads of three thousand cats. Now she tried to reduce the growing pain by an act of will, dimming the fluttery green energy to a pinpoint if only for a moment, as she had been taught to do in Arizona. There was a sign for a rest stop in ten miles and it was two-fifty, which meant she would beat the phone call by a minute. The tape about blue-chip stocks had mercifully finished, but now Donald was whistling "The Colonel Bogey March" and tapping out the rhythm on the cellular phone, anticipatory to his daily broker call. His lips pursed and the whistling and tapping stopped as he made a notation in red pencil on the day's *Wall Street Journal*.

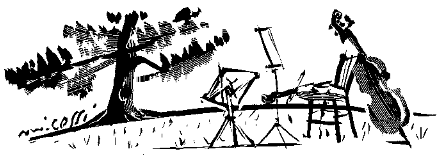
"I'm going to have to stop while you phone. I'm not feeling all that well," she said, stiffening at his possible reaction.

"Fine, honey. We've got time to kill." Donald glanced at his watch. "There's room for your nappy in Davenport."

She never understood quite how "nap" became "nappy" but had always judged an inquiry not quite worthwhile. She looked at him with the longing close to homesickness that the troubled at heart feel for those who treat the world as their lovely private apple. Donald was a passably good man, or so everyone thought, a citizen so apparently solid that, as a club jokester had said, he could throw a successful fund-raiser for a crack dealer. A business associate had organized a dinner for ten at a hotel in Davenport, which Donald looked forward to as an orphan would his first circus. He was being especially tender because Clare was the daughter of one of the founding partners of the accounting firm—of which he was now the C.E.O., and which had branches throughout the Midwest—and the Davenport office was doing especially well. The Davenport people would be thrilled to meet Clare. It would be all bows by the men and curtsies by the ladies. He had even alerted them about Clare's taste in wine, which he thought a wasteful vice she had inherited from her mother. Frequently, he noted, the wine on a dinner bill equalled the price of the food, and when he picked up a case of Meursault or Chambertin at the wine store he liked to joke out loud, "Here goes three shares of General Motors." The old clerk at the wine store invariably smiled his mask of a smile, knowing it was Clare's money in the first place—a point that would appall Clare herself in that she was so fair-minded about her wealth as to be frequently rendered immobile.

But not now. She eased the car into the rest stop, slowing to a creep for fear of hitting the children darting in and out of campers and cars in the crowded parking area. Across a green swath, semis were parked, idling. The muffled drone of their engines ceased only at destinations. One of the semis held squealing pigs in metal-slatted layers, while another was full of silent cattle. Clare got out, taking the leather-and-canvas Buisonte bag Donald had bought her on their trip to Florence. At the time, she had not been able to believe his brusque affability translated so well. They had dined nearly every evening with Italians he had met on his tours of brokerage offices, several times in their homes, allowing Clare a look into the life of Florence never allowed the ordinary tourist. Donald waved at her with the other hand on the phone, antsy to make his daily call. She watched him dial, then walked toward the Iowa Welcome Center and the adjoining bathrooms, her head beginning to thrum in the noisy heat. It occurred to her that the tourists all looked blowsy and fatigued because they were headed back east at the end of their vacations.

When she thought about it later, Clare was surprised again by how clear and cool her painful mind had felt. Every human and object, the landscape itself, had the distinct outlines found in a coloring book before the crayons are applied. The green wall of the cornfield behind the Welcome Center became luminous and of surpassing loveliness. She turned and walked back toward Donald in the car, but he was in his brokerage trance, his clipped business voice saying, "But what the hell happened to Isomet?"



In the bathroom stall, she checked her bag for certain items: Donald, Jr.,'s Boy Scout compass, which she used on hikes with Zilpha; a small can of cran-

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WORK SONG

My name is Henri. Listen. It's morning.
I pull my head from my scissors, I pull
the light bulb from my mouth—Boss comes at me
while I'm still blinking.
Pastes the pink slip on my collarbone.
It's O.K., I say, I was a lazy worker, and I stole.
I wipe my feet on his skullcap on the way out.

I am Henri, mouth full of soda crackers.
I live in Toulouse, which is a piece of cardboard.
Summers the mayor paints it blue, we fish in it.
Winters we skate on it. Children are always
drowning or falling through cracks. Parents are distraught
but get over it. It's easy to replace a child.
Like my parents' child, Henri.

I stuff my hands in my shoes
and crawl through the snow on all fours.
Animals fear me. I smell so good.
I have two sets of footprints, I confuse the police.
When I reach the highway I unzip my head.

I am a zipper. A paper cut.
I fed myself so many times
through the shredder I am confetti,
I am a ticker-tape parade, I am an astronaut
waving from my convertible at Henri.

Henri from Toulouse, is that you?
Why the unhappy face? I should shoot you
for spoiling my parade. Come on, man,
glue yourself together! You want so much to die
that you don't want to die.

My name is Henri. I am Toulouse. I am scraps
of bleached parchment, I am the standing militia,
I am a quill, the Red Cross, I am the feather
in my cap, the Hebrew Testament, I am the World Court.
An electric fan blows
beneath my black robe. I am dignity itself.

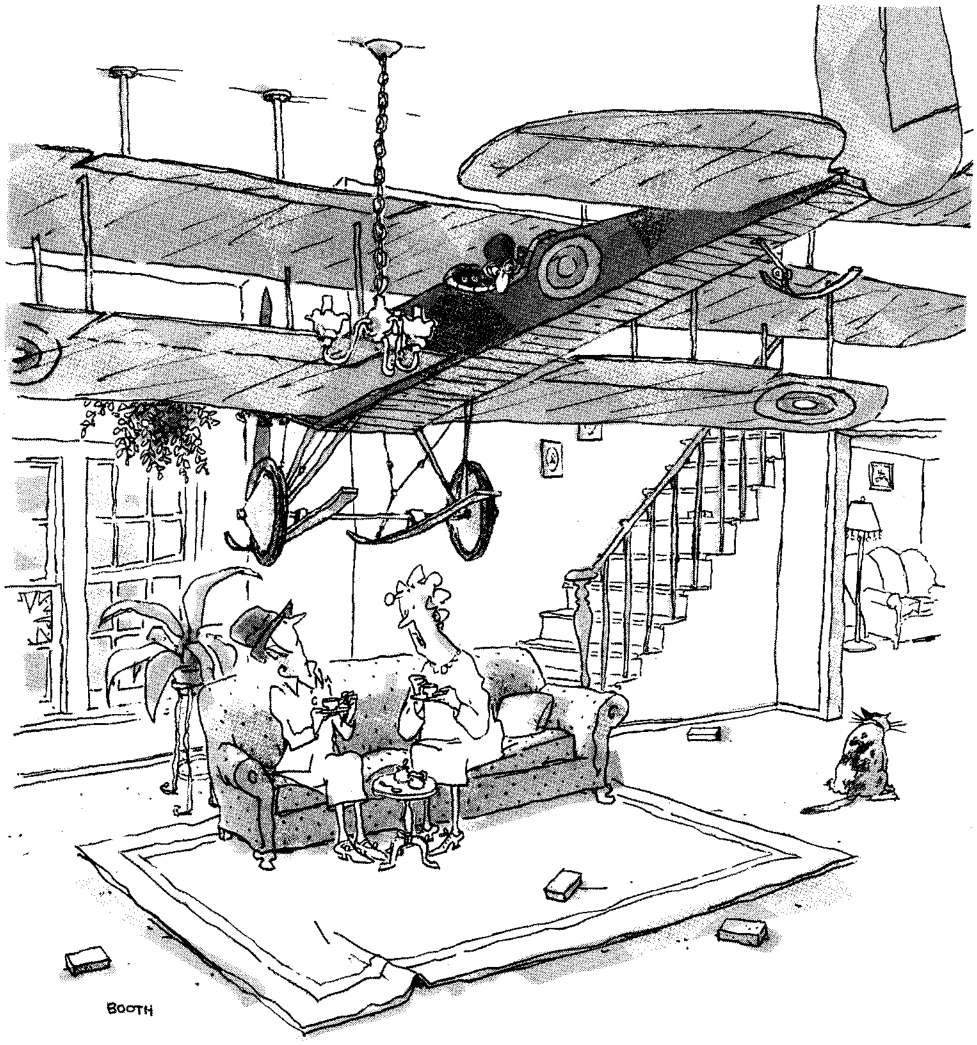
I am an ice machine.
I am an alp.
I stuff myself in the refrigerator
wrapped in newsprint. With salt in my heart
I stay good for days.

—Mark Levine

• •

berry juice; a book with the addresses of three orphan children she wrote to and helped support in the Dominican Republic, Mexico, and Costa Rica; in a leather packet was her passport and a copy of the new translation of the Tao Tê Ching given to her by a counsellor at the pain clinic; and at the bottom, and most important, was the tan beret she had bought nearly thirty years before on the Rue Saint-Jacques and had never worn. As a comparative-literature senior at Michigan State, she was to have spent a year studying in Paris, but actually stayed only three weeks, because her father died and the family sent her boyfriend, Donald, to fetch her home. At the time, Donald was her act of rebellion, a left-wing political-science major who wore lumberjack shirts, the only son in a working-class family from Flint, who intended to be a writer or labor leader. On dates they read John Dos Passos's "U.S.A." trilogy aloud to each other. Curiously, her father had rather liked Donald, and perhaps this was foresight into the man Donald would become. Each morning for three weeks in her tiny pension, Clare would look at her beret, but she was too timid to put it on.

Now, in the toilet stall, she finally put on the beret and laughed softly to herself. It was so easy. For luck, she also slipped on a conch-pearl ring Zilpha had given her in March as a remembrance. Among her last words had been "We never got around to the Amazon"—a trip they had planned since they were girls, when they were convinced they'd discover a pleasanter civilization somewhere in the jungle. Clare took out a Cafergot pill, then put it back, preferring pain-ridden consciousness. She tried to remember something René Char had written, "Blank blank blank the legitimate fruits of daring," but the growing pain blinded her memory. The note itself was simple enough: "I am in a small red car driving east. My husband has been abusing me. Do not believe anything he says. Call my daughter." She added Laurel's number, wrote "To The Police" on the envelope, and stuck it to the side of the stall with a postage stamp. Maybe "abuse" was too strong a word, Clare thought, but maybe not. She noted that someone had scratched "Bob is cute" on the paint with a sharp object, and she smiled at the absolute muddle of human sexuality.



"Occasionally he lobs a brick at the cat."

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Behind the Welcome Center, a small boy walking the family dog held Clare's bag as she climbed the fence, which was more difficult than she anticipated. She wobbled and the wire cut into the soles of her tennis shoes. On the other side, she lost a few moments explaining to the boy why he couldn't go along, but then the dog started barking and she hurried off down between two corn rows, toward the interior, wherever that might be.

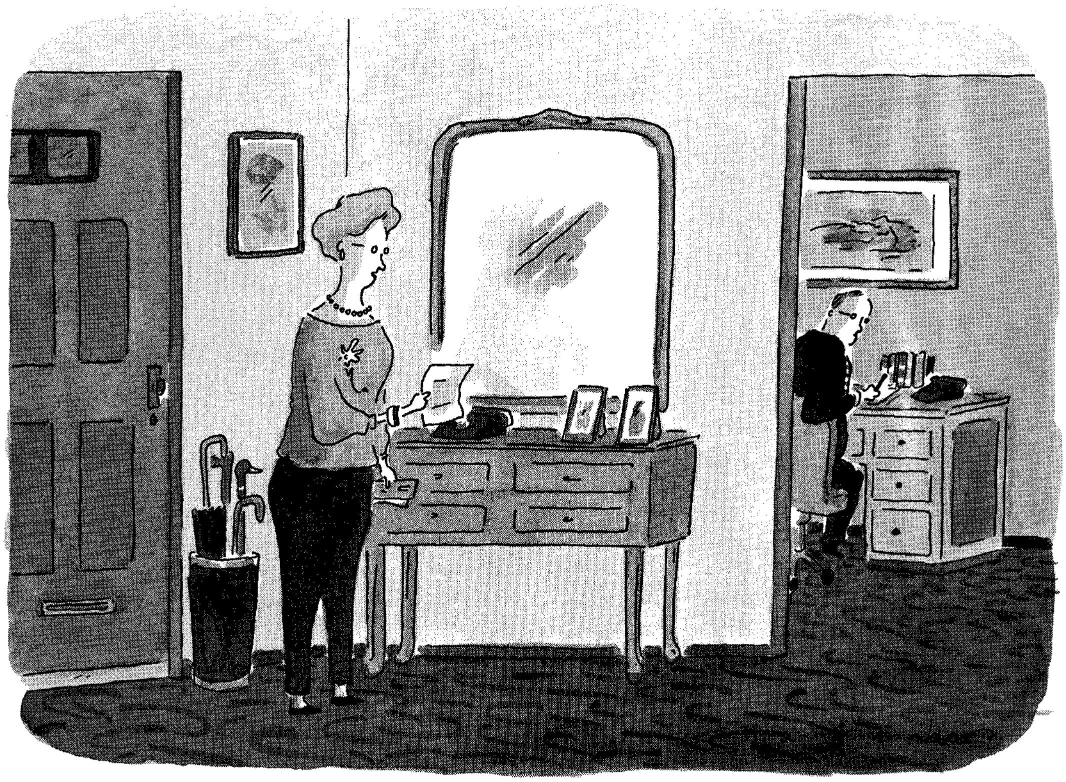
WITHIN a scant five minutes, Clare would have liked to turn around, had turning around not already become so improbable. A hundred yards into the cornfield, the beret made her feel silly, so she took it off and stuffed it into her bag. The moment the hat came off, the pain became so excruciating that she fell to her hands and knees and retched up her lunch of iced tea and a club sandwich. The pain was such that she could not balance herself, so she pushed her legs backward until she lay on her stomach. She closed her eyes a moment, but the world became bright red and whirling. There was the slightest memory of a pain lesson but it was too abstract to be of much use: the secret was to maintain your equilibrium in the face of incomprehension, as pain, finally, could not be understood.

She looked at the way the roots of the corn broke up the earth at her eye level. She tried to let go of her brain, which now seemed about to boil over with its brew of knots and hackings, clots, soft lumps against sharp, hot stones. She rolled over onto her back. By the time the sun made its way down through the tassels, leaves, and stalks, it was weak and liquid. There was a crow call so close it startled her—the bird flapping low over her row, then twisting, darting back for another look, squawking loudly in warning at the intruder, then making a third pass up the row out of curiosity. She had never been so close to a crow, she thought, and tried closing her eyes a moment to rehearse crows from the past. The red storm had somewhat subsided and she saw the open mouth of a rooster at her grandmother's, and herself as a child stooping near the rooster as he swelled his throat, craned his neck, and crowed as if he could not stop himself. As a child she had liked cellars because they frightened her; now she longed for a cool, black cellar with a rooster for company, and for her grandmother's dog, whom the rooster pretended to chase though he kept a safe distance, as if he and the dog had agreed upon a reasonable pace. Grandfather told her that the rooster felt the whole world was after his hens, and that was all he thought about.

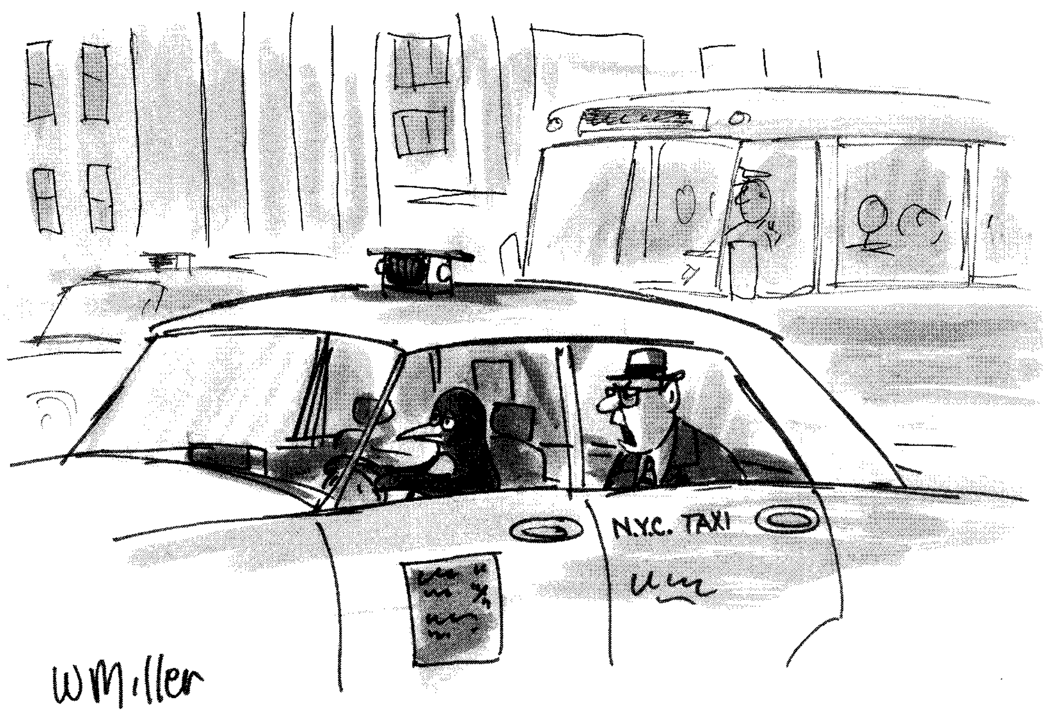
Now she heard a siren, but only gradually understood the sound, from back toward the rest stop. She scrambled to her feet and they moved off quickly down the row as if informed by their own panic. The siren became louder, then stopped abruptly. She continued to run, holding her hands and the bag up against the slapping of the leaves. There was an image of Donald explaining himself to the police, who she hoped would call Laurel despite Donald's usual cagey aplomb. But then Donald passed away with her breathlessness, and her flayed brain began to play the rest of the Stravinsky Donald had truncated; then she tripped on a clod of earth and fell sprawling in a wide path where the rows switched direction to accommodate a variation in terrain. Now she was so far from Route 80 that she no longer could hear the trucks, only the crows; the one had become five, and she twisted her neck for a look as they passed over, apparently discussing her. Perhaps the police could see the birds far out in the cornfield and guess that she was there, but she hoped they would believe the "small red car driving east." The sun was warm in the narrow clearing and she moved her upper body into the shade. She drew out the can of cranberry juice, drank it, then looked at the Boy Scout compass, deciding to head west along the wider row after a rest. She curled up, noting that the earth smelled like a damp board after rain, then more heat. She looked at a dirty hand and thought idly with a smile, despite the pain, that for the first time in her life she did not know where her next shower was coming from.

CLARE slept for a few minutes but was startled awake by her first dream in several months. She was a girl again, out in her rowboat on Burt Lake, and Dr. Samuel Roth was on the dock calling out and asking her why she had died. That was all there was to the dream and then she awoke. The pain had localized toward the right side of her head and within it Dr. Roth continued to call after she woke up. Clare was difficult to push off balance and ignored the phenomenon, which was not unlike certain other symptoms of classic migraines. Besides, she liked Dr. Roth very much; he not only was her physician and confidant, up to a point, but also had been Zilpha's doctor. Dreams are no respecter of time and Dr. Roth couldn't have been more than a child when Clare was a girl in a rowboat. She turned over onto her back and thought that at the very least she had had her first dream since Zilpha died; two weeks later, when Clare's dog died, her sleep had become even blacker. The dream wasn't ominous to Clare —death simply didn't hold her interest —but there was the nagging angle of Dr. Roth, whom Clare at that very moment realized she had been in love with for a brief period.

This recognition jolted her to her feet and she continued to head west, wondering if "maize" and "maze" were somehow connected. She normally walked a great deal, because she was essentially claustrophobic and walking made the world appear larger. The fact that the field offered little variation was moot. Dr. Roth's curiously lighthearted question meant something different to her than might appear. Once, when they had had a drink after a library-board meeting, he said that most of his patients were already dead, and life herself was merely a technicality that allowed them to get up in the morning to collect a paycheck. They shared this sort of acerbic wit, which



"The folks at the Internal Revenue Service cordially invite you to join them in looking over a four-leaf clover that you overlooked before."



"How can you drive a cab in this city and not know where the corner of Reade and Elk is!"

made them both somewhat mistrusted in what are known as the better circles. The characteristic was harder on Dr. Roth than on Clare because this sharp wit, added to his slowness to write unnecessary prescriptions, limited his practice to those who desired honesty in medicine.

But on another evening, after another library-board meeting, when they had had to deal with a group of evangelical nitwits who wanted a ban on public consumption of "The Catcher in the Rye" and "Slaughterhouse Five" Dr. Roth had looked up from his brandy and said, "You should be careful. You've lived your life with the kind of will that could cause a lot of problems later."

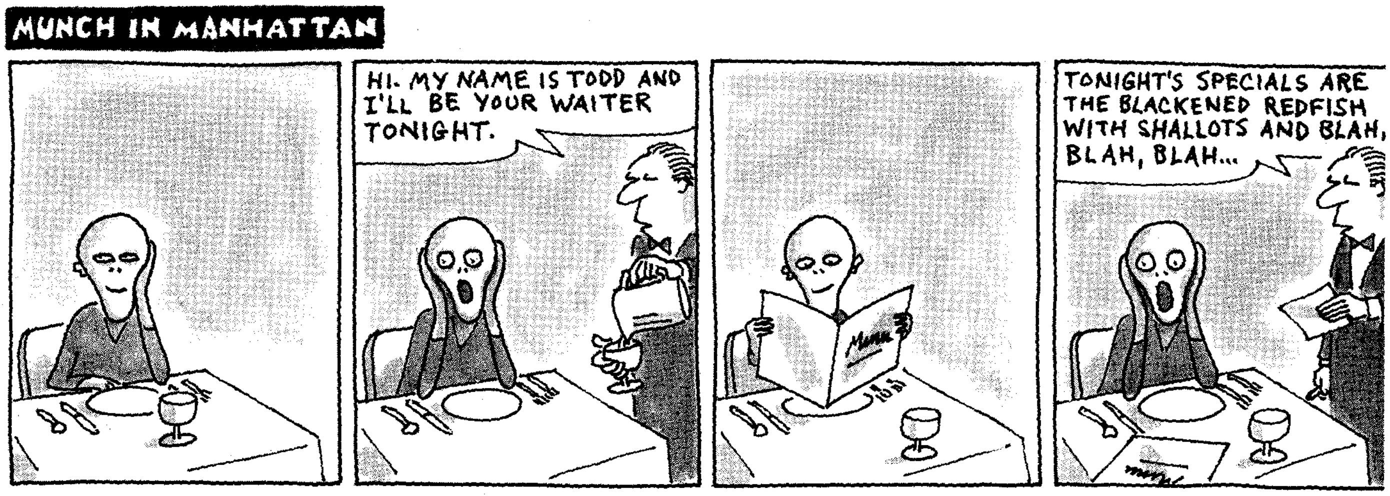
"I know it," she had said. But she didn't know it; the statement only brought forth the familiar feeling of an unexamined truth.

That was nine months ago, and the morning after, when she had heard Donald pull out of the driveway, she began to weep, an act so strange to her that she couldn't pinpoint the event that had last brought her to it. A few weeks later, both Zilpha and Clare's dog had been diagnosed, Zilpha with lung and the dog with fibroid cancer.

Down toward the end of the row, the greenness narrowed and blurred, and then there seemed to be a line of taller greenery. She quickened her pace in wan hope for a change of view, but she slowed down as the pain redeveloped with the swiftness of her walking, though luckily enough the pain had moved to the left side of her head, where it was more confinable. On the left side Clare could reduce the pain to a diffuse green light, then work consciously on reducing the dimensions of the light. The only side effect was that her sense of time became utterly jumbled, which was vertiginous but preferable to the pain. During one of these seizures, and in this particular state, the best she could do was remember to feed the dog. Out in the field, all that was required was to walk a straight line.

In fact, she thought she was moving within the heart of time. Normally she stood aside and lived on her comments to herself about what was happening to her, but when the pain moved to the left she moved inside herself, and this had the virtue of being novel within the framework of her suffering. The pain was always a moment behind her, as if she stood on the platform of a caboose watching the world go away. There was a sudden impulse to pray, but she found the act embarrassing because, of course, she could *see* herself praying. When she was a child, up near Petoskey on summer vacation, her parents had allowed her to go to Daily Vacation Bible School with the maid's daughter. The maid was a mixed-blood Chippewa but her religion was evangelical. Clare's parents had once discovered their daughter out in the garage praying over a three-legged cat that lived in the neighborhood. This was viewed as highly amusing and became part of a repertoire of "Clare stories" her parents shared with their friends during the rites of the Martini hour. Now, to her surprise, that made Clare angry. What was the point of being angry at her parents for something that happened over forty years ago, but then what was so funny about a child praying for a three-legged cat? In defiance, she dropped to her knees but couldn't think of anything to say, so got up again. Dr. Roth should see her now. He liked to think that, all efforts of the glitz media to the contrary, life is Dickensian, and pathos is invariably the morning's leading news item. Clare with dusty knees and a verbless prayer would, no doubt, amuse him.

It had taken Dr. Roth several years to set Clare straight over the fact that Donald was an anti-Semite, albeit a quiet one. Clare had invited Dr. Roth and his wife to a large dinner party, and late in a rather boozy evening Dr. Roth had made an acid but very funny comment about Richard Nixon, which everyone had laughed at but Donald, to whom Nixon was an object of reverence. "Golly, but you guys can be smart-asses," Donald had said, and the table had become so quiet that Zilpha had plunged courageously ahead with a lame joke. When everyone left, Clare was instantly furious, partly at herself for letting the first incident pass. Years before, they had been visiting friends in Palm Beach, the real purpose of the trip being to pick up the dog from other friends. They had all eaten dinner at the Sandpiper Club and their host had proudly announced that the club was


MUNCH IN MANHATTAN
HI. MY NAME IS TODD AND I'LL BE YOUR WAITER TONIGHT.
TONIGHT'S SPECIALS ARE THE BLACKENED REDFISH WITH SHALLOTS AND BLAH, BLAH, BLAH...

off-limits to Jews. Clare had merely said that she found the fact odd just twenty-five years after the Second World War and let it drop, though the comment put everyone on edge. Before bedtime, Donald had said something critical about her dinner behavior, admitting quite pompously that he agreed with the club policy. She had only looked at him and said, "I see." Next morning, the joy of picking up the yellow Labrador, who was being given away for littering the pristine lawn with stray coconuts and palm fronds, made her overlook the issue.

Curiously, Dr. Roth was remote and analytical on the subject of anti-Semitism. He had grown up in Ann Arbor in a sheltered academic family, and after medical school had married a Jewish girl from Memphis whose family had been in the country well before the Civil War. His experience was limited to a number of minor incidents similar to the one with Donald. He tried to tease his way out of Clare's questions by saying that being Jewish couldn't be as bad as being a manic-depressive or a woman, and his wife was all three. When Clare insisted, he finally admitted that his own Jewish experience could be likened to her acute migraines, not in the degree of pain but in the utter uncertainty of when something unpleasant was going to occur. The incident could be a small item in the paper, say an inept political statement, or the recent suicide of one of his favorite authors, Primo Levi. The condition of being Jewish bred a perpetual wariness shared by all minorities, and the wariness tended to become an irksome cliché in life unless one was careful. The true burden of awareness had been carried by his parents' generation, where the threat was all too specific.

One late afternoon over drinks, he said something that disturbed Clare—something to the effect that they shared an economic condition that was out of synch, and definitely out of sympathy, with ninety-nine point ninety-nine per cent of the rest of the world, and that they had to walk an extremely narrow line so as not to die from being rich freaks. He asked how Clare and Donald got their home and she said it had been a wedding gift from her mother. Dr. Roth said his own home had come from his father-in-law and when had either of them given more than nominal consideration to the purchase of anything—food, clothing, wine, books, cars, vacations? He said he would have gone mad long ago without the single day a week he spent as a volunteer at Detroit Receiving, a hospital that served the black ghetto and the poorest whites. Then he noticed a hurt look quickly pass across her face before she could conceal it.

"What about me, Sam?" she said.

"Oh, your reading in unpleasant areas and your migraines keep the tips of your toes in the real world."

"That's not very much, is it?"

"It's usually enough. Our sort doesn't need a great deal of consciousness to get by. Most often sending a check will do."

"I'm not leaving this shitheel fern bar on that sour note." She signalled the waiter for another glass of wine. Clare swore on the order of once a year. "This can't be another monkey occasion." She was referring to a benefit ball they had attended, the purpose of which was to raise money for new accommodations for the chimpanzees at the Detroit Zoo. Donald was in Atlanta for a few days and Dr. Roth's wife had entered a manic shopping phase that could best be resolved in New York City. Zilpha had only recently died and Dr. Roth thought it important for Clare to get out of the house. Unfortunately, they were seated at a table with two self-important General Motors executives whose wives ignored everyone, and an exhausted neurosurgeon whose wife obviously wanted to be at a zippier table. Despite a normal aversion for talking shop in front of laymen, Dr. Roth and the neurosurgeon began some heavy-hearted joking on the effects of crack on the nervous system of newborn infants, the neurosurgeon's punch line forcing everyone to drink hard and fast.

"We're going to have to look at Detroit as a vast rookery for psychotics," the man said.

"What's a rookery?" a G.M. wife asked.

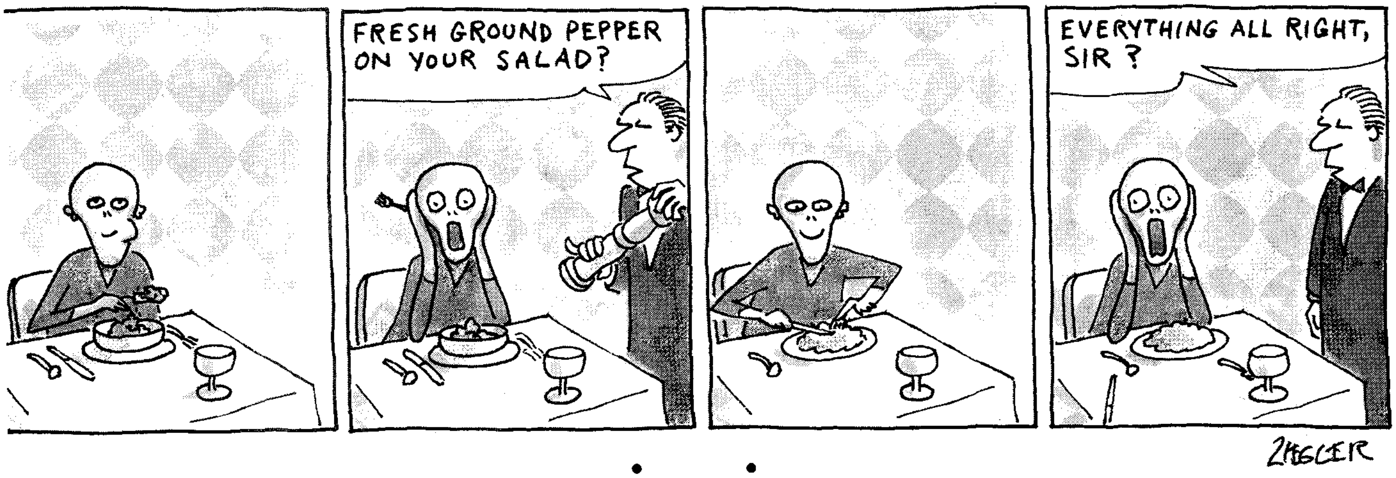
"A breeding ground. Our dominant product is psychosis. It's moved ahead of automobiles."

"That doesn't speak well for the future of the work force," an executive huffed.

"Not unless you're producing worker-tested automatic rifles," Dr. Roth quipped.

That evening had been effectively deadened and in the shitheel fern bar they tried to work themselves out of the hole they had dug.

"I'm tired. Can't you look in your catalogue of piths and gists?" Dr. Roth was referring to a ledger Clare had started at the university and continued to the present, where she recorded pas-


FRESH GROUND PEPPER ON YOUR SALAD?
EVERYTHING ALL RIGHT, SIR?
ZIEGLER

sages of literature she cherished. He had been amazed at Clare's ledger—the range was boggling, all recorded in a neat, almost lapidary script, from Aeschylus down to E. M. Cioran, with a preponderance coming from the early modernist period in world literature, from 1880 to 1920. Her intended but never finished senior honors thesis was to have been on Apollinaire and there were many translated quotes, but her temperament seemed to have been most captured by Rilke. Dr. Roth's own sense of balance had been disturbed when he came across Yeats' notion that life was a long preparation for something that never occurred.

"My piths and gists don't work since Zilpha and Sammy died." Sammy had been the name of the female Labrador. In an instant, Clare relived Dr. Roth's stricken look when he had stopped by late one afternoon for a drink and found her and Zilpha listening to the Beethoven late quartets while Zilpha held the fat, stinking, cancerous Sammy on her lap, smooching with the dog, hugging its bulk to her breast, both of them within a month of death.

"I'm thinking hard," Dr. Roth said. "Let's not come to this place again. It's full of binge shoppers trying to sedate themselves. Now, I know you have an aversion to anything Oriental as being too passive, even though you're utterly passive yourself. But a Wayne State University student suffering from obvious malnutrition said something to me about the only use for today being today. The only reality you are ever going to get is the ordinary one you make for yourself. In other words, there's no big breakthrough."

"That's awfully grim. Does that mean there's no Christmas on earth? And what does he do with the information?"

"The 'he' is a she. I gave her ten bucks and made her promise she'd go eat a good meal. Then I loaded her up with vitamin samples. I don't know what she does with this information. I only know she doesn't take care of herself."

"Can I make a donation?" Clare had become nervous.

"Not at the moment. Perhaps later, when a donation doesn't mean you're delaying doing something about yourself."

"When you say 'doing something about yourself' it sounds like psychobabble. You know, the big section in Borders Book Shop that covers self-improvement."

"Pathology can only be imaginative up to a certain point. If you like, I'll work on that sentence."

CLARE found herself nearly at the end of the row and presented with a barrier she hadn't allowed herself to comprehend while thinking about Dr. Roth. It was a dense thicket, apparently as impenetrable as any of the topiary hedges she had seen in England and France. The thicket grew into the cornfield, so she couldn't turn right or left. She stepped back twenty feet for a better view and thought she could make out the top of a cottonwood; as her breathing calmed, she was sure she heard flowing water; then she remembered that a mile or so before they reached the rest stop there had been a creek or river named after a cow—Guernsey, she thought. Her watch said that had been over two hours ago, which didn't seem possible. A creek crossed at seventy miles an hour in a split second doesn't look threatening, but now she felt tears welling up. She had expected a barnyard and farmhouse at the end of the row, and now the compass said that was a possibility only in a southerly direction since north was the interstate. Millions of women merely leave their husbands; why had she fled? She swallowed with difficulty, wishing she had saved some of the cranberry juice, then looked up at the thunderheads, their edges lined with silver from the descending sun. She sat down and made traceries in the dirt with the compass bracket. She had an impulse to discuss the situation with Zilpha but she felt that would further loosen her tenuous grip. Laurel was a better choice.

"Laurel, you little bitch, this is partly your idea. What do I do now?" There was an urge to be angry, cheap, vulgar.

"You could have waited until Davenport and taken a cab to the airport when Dad was in the shower." This was so like Laurel, who was matter-of-fact even in the cradle.

"I knew the pain was coming and I lost my good sense." The pain was increasing a bit with the tinge of self-pity, so she stiffened up. At the clinic, one of the first lessons was never to adopt a "why me?" attitude, which might precipitate a collapse.

"You know very well your good sense is bullshit. Remember when I came home from college years ago and said that you act as if you're living three feet from yourself? You were angry but it's true."

"I suppose so, but let's get back to

the situation right now. I'm sitting here in the dirt and I don't know what to do. Like most people, I'm only prepared for the life I've already lived, none of which included this sort of thing." Clare remained cool with that admission. On all the trips she had made to beautiful places with Zilpha, they had never camped out, though twice they had bought a lot of expensive equipment that on return was donated to the Boy Scouts. Laurel and her husband had backpacked everywhere, even in the winter on cross-country skis.

"For Christ's sake, Mother, you're going to have to toughen up. You said you read that book on camping I sent. You're going to have to get some water in your system to avoid hypothermia. You know that from a lifetime of tennis, which I always thought was a waste of time. You might have to go back to the rest stop for water."

"I refuse. It looks like it's going to rain. My bag is canvas, so maybe I could catch some water."

"It's important that you crawl into that thicket to stay dry. No matter how warm it is now, if you get wet you'll be cold by nightfall. If you get desperate, don't forget why you're doing this. I'd say you're in for a long night unless you're willing to hoof it back to the interstate. I hope you'll come to spend a few months with us."

"That's kind of you, but I have my heart set on Paris."

"That's silly. Paris won't be the same for you as it was thirty years ago. You'll be disappointed."

"I don't care. Anyway, I've passed through a few times since and I don't think I'll be disappointed."

Clare signed off on the phantom conversation with a wave at the oncoming thunderheads, which had begun to rumble. She rechecked the edge of the thicket, noting that there were narrow breaks and holes that raccoon and perhaps deer had made. She crawled into a small opening in the greenery and looked upward, seeing enough of the sky to know that she would still get wet in a hard rain. She remembered with a smile something she had overheard her decorator say on the phone, to the effect that his friend should fasten his seat belt because it was going to be a bumpy night. President Reagan had also liked to quote from the movies. Then she recalled how, as a child at Thanksgiving time on her grandparents' farm, she liked to make small caves in dried corn that had been stacked in shocks. She felt that this memory composed her first bright idea of the day other than leaving Donald, and she busied herself uprooting the green stalks, which came up easily, and which she layered on top of the thicket. It was easy, so she erred on the side of excess until, when she crawled into the thicket hole, there was a large area that blocked out the sky. If she hadn't been so thirsty, she would have been happy with her nest. She emptied out the bag containing her small purse, compass, address book, the beret, the empty juice can (she didn't want to litter), matches, the passport, and the Tao Tê Ching. It had been Zilpha's notion that the act of taking your passport with you everywhere added drama to life. She arranged these objects like talismans, then scooted back out and spread the bag's mouth open.

KILAUEA

Here is a stone with holes in it,
like a skull. It has furrows,
like my father's brow. Once
he could get up when he wanted and go
into an untouched future; when I knew him
he was sprinting to get to death
before his cares could catch up
and kill him. A small rainbow
forms around me, curves in
like the birth forceps that hoisted me out
—witness the depressions in the temple bones—
until its two ends almost touch
my feet. Could it be that *I*
am the pot of gold? Both pots,
one inside the other,
like the fire leaping up inside the steel drum the night workers hold out their hands to, in the icy air before morning,
or the pitch-black of speech about to be born through scarlet lips,
or the child getting off her bicycle inside the old woman the priest has told to get ready to die,
or the father of Edinburgh rising early inside the son of Pawtucket—to whom on Sundays after church he read the funnies, Scripture in the father tongue?
Now the rainbow throws its double onto the air above it,
as on those Sundays, when the first blessing was we were blessed,

• •

The thunder deepened in its volume and she looked up to see lightning shattering the sky like luminous tree roots. The thunderclap that followed had a sharp edge, as if the sky were being torn, and the wind came up suddenly, so that the pale leaves down the row were flapping. Clare backed into her makeshift cave with a feeling that things were well in hand, at least for the moment, but the torrent that followed, brief as it was, cast her behavior in a fresh light. When she had given birth to Laurel, that early May so long ago, she had been able to hear a cloudburst beyond the walls and windows of the delivery room, and there was a tinge of déjà vu in the present rain. *I had two children and lived with a man nearly thirty years. I don't seem to have a real idea what occurred to me. Maybe nobody does, or just a few.*

The driving rain splattered mud upward and formed puddles in the opening, but she was dry and warm and drowsy, the remnants of pain merely diffuse, and endurable. She froze, startled at the slightest movement to her left, but then saw it was only a cottontail, the same kind of rabbit that made her put chicken wire around her herb garden back home. The rabbit studied Clare from half a dozen feet away, then continued feeding on wild-clover shoots, but with its ears alertly erect and its nose trying to determine if Clare presented a danger. Within its ears, on

and the second, we knew we were blessed.
In the fire pit, where patches
of black skin slide over fiery flesh,
a scrap of paper
the wind, agent
of Providence, tosses in
vanishes without a flameup or crackle,
and my balls—densest
concentration of future anywhere in the body—suddenly hurt,
with the claustrophobia of a million swimmers terrified
they will never get out.
In the light before dawn
the blue glimmering fades
above four pillows dented all night by four dreaming heads.
The father, already in the cellar, yanks
the great iron lever, the iron teeth
gnash, ashes dotted with fire
crash into the ash pit; and shovels in
a new utopia of coal, in a black field,
which lies quiet, then jets up all over
in flickerings like little senseless bluets.
The pipes and radiators of the house
knock and bang in free un-unison.
In the bathroom he strops the razor,
hoots out last night's portion of disgust,
and shaves, a fleshy, rhythmic rasping, like a
katydid's.

—GALWAY KINNELL

• •

the pinkish lobes, wood ticks dotted the flesh, gorging on blood. Clare counted seven. She and the rabbit stared at each other so long that Clare didn't notice that the rain had stopped and the water caught by her bag was both being absorbed and draining slowly out. The rabbit's ears stiffened for an instant at the sound of a cock pheasant crowing from the direction of the creek, followed by the sharp clear notes of red-winged blackbirds. There was a new dimension of stillness in all of this and Clare felt somehow heartened that the rabbit didn't feel in danger, much less know what a human was. She stayed absolutely quiet, breathing soundlessly and not even blinking her eyes for fear the rabbit would leave her alone. Laurel should see her now, she thought, well within her body, moving gracefully in the heart of time; but then the rabbit hopped off for reasons of its own. The message was dim but Laurel seemed to be asking a question.

"Mother, what about the water?"

Clare scrambled out, her hands skidding in the fresh mud. "Oh, fuck!" she yelled, for the first time in her life. The bag was soaked but nearly empty, with scarcely a gulp left down in a corner. She pressed her face into it for fear of losing any of the precious water, which tasted a little of the sunscreen lotion that had leaked there years ago.

How dumb. There was the sense that she was stuck in a children's story of enormous dimensions, one of those old European tales out of "My Book House": *Ramona fled, watching the barbarians destroy the village, hiding herself behind a tree on the edge of the dark forest.* Clare supposed that even if she did make her way back to the rest stop and drop a quarter in the pay phone the world could never repair itself. With a smile, she imagined Donald's umbrage when the police asked him if he had abused his wife. And did he know who might own the red car travelling east? It was she who had set fire to the village before running into the dark forest, and now the consequences enlarged themselves as the sun reappeared, casting a golden, late-afternoon light off the tassels. She was a free woman but would gladly have traded anything for a quart of cold water. Donald was also free to go home and soothe his wounds with his Bing Crosby collection, which he liked to tell visitors "was known far and wide," at least among other collectors. Clare was not a bully, though, and raised in her mind some of Donald's good points: he was, surprisingly, a relentless lover; he had taken Laurel and Donald, Jr., everywhere, from Disneyland to Busch Gardens, the Smithsonian, and the Museum of Natural History in New York (while Clare was at the Whitney), to Detroit Pistons games, to the Lions, to the Red Wings, to their corporate box for the Detroit Tigers, while Clare stayed home and read or went on outings with Zilpha. Donald loved the life outside the mind and slept like a rock, though he had recently surprised her with a first edition of "Tar" to round out her Sherwood Anderson collection. And last Christmas he had managed to find Faulkner's book of poems "A Green Bough," which, she overheard him telling a friend, cost him "an arm and a leg."

Clare cleaned the drying mud off her hands with a sharp stone and tried not to think of water. Perhaps the beginning of the end had been five years ago, when Donald, Jr., had just finished his sophomore year at the University of Michigan. Clare and Zilpha, on whim, had been late additions to a list of matrons who wished to go on a Detroit Institute of Arts tour of the museums of Moscow and Leningrad. Zilpha's visa had come in ten days but Clare's had never arrived, despite repeated phone calls from her travel agent to Washington, and they had missed the trip. Zilpha's husband, whom Donald loathed, was a big-time liberal dope-lawyer, and through the intercession of a congressman he discovered that Donald had jinxed the visa with a phone call to a friend in the State Department—the sort of favor that is due a major Republican fund-raiser like Donald. When Clare confronted him, he had affected a minor breakdown, saying he couldn't have borne up under the strain of his beloved wife's visiting the "evil empire." Untypically, Clare thought of shooting him while he slept, but instead she and Zilpha went off to Costa Rica to visit one of the children whose survival a brochure and a letter said she sponsored. This trip had also made Donald frantic, even given the assurances of his State Department friend that Costa Rica was "as safe as Switzerland."

Clare was beginning to feel the mild dizziness brought on by hypothermia, a lightness in the head from her extreme thirst; vomiting, plus the long hot walk, had pushed her to the edge of tolerance, and though the late afternoon sun was dimming, she found it unendurable. Back in her green cave, she felt she was owed another reassuring message from Laurel, when her eyes lit on the cranberry-juice can. She remembered that the camping book Laurel had given her said to boil suspicious water for fifteen minutes. Of course. She grabbed the can and scrambled on her hands and knees through the dense thicket toward what she thought of as the distant sound of water, much increased after the cloudburst. Unfortunately, the Guernsey was less than twenty feet distant, and Clare nearly catapulted down the slick, muddy bank into the sluggish, dark-brown water, an inadvertent baptism by immersion, but she came up waist-deep and laughing. The world that had been so narrowed by her physical and mental anguish became quite suddenly larger as she filled the cranberry-juice can, resisting the strong temptation to drink the water straight.

HALF an hour later, Clare had the water bubbling away, the can stuck in a small mound of dirt and the fire crackling around it, with the dry grass and reed stalks kindling the dampish sticks found beneath the cottonwood tree. To extend her patience to the advised fifteen minutes she looked at her only book, the Tao Tê Ching, for a few minutes, but she was far too excited about the boiling muddy water to concentrate. The counsellor at the pain clinic had told her that if she adapted all the principles of the volume to her life she could very well be cured of her migraines. Dr. Roth had not been sanguine about this prospect, saying that if she were Pope John XXIII or Martin Buber or St. Theresa she would also be free of the disease. Clare carried the book along, though she had a childish aversion to Orientals, because the translator had also done her favorite volume of Rilke, "Sonnets to Orpheus." The aversion had been occasioned by her father's service as a major during the Second World War, though he never got beyond Washington, D.C. One day Clare stayed home from nursery school in order to ride along with her mother when she took her dad to the train station. He had been home on leave for only a few days when he was called back to Washington, and both of her parents had wept at the station. After the train pulled away her mother had told her, "He's off to fight Tojo." Clare knew that Tojo chopped the heads off American soldiers, and she was terribly frightened at the idea of a headless father.

At the clinic in Arizona she had become friendly with a wheat farmer from Fort Dodge, Iowa, who was suffering from a spinal defect, the accompanying spasms of which could strike him to the ground at any time. When they had all been given the Tao one evening at dinner, he had been irritable, but in the morning he assured Clare that the "secrets" of the book might save them. She was startled at this statement, because Frank, the farmer, was critical of their counsellor, whom he referred to as a "goofy bastard," partly because the counsellor wore an earring. Frank had also been outspoken against an Italian from Albany with a bone disease who had told Clare at the dinner table that she had "nice stems." Frank had fairly shouted at the Italian to mind his language. A plump woman from Pasadena had piped up that there was nothing dirty about good legs, and the table had agreed, Frank leaving in a huff before dessert. After that, despite the heat, Clare had worn slacks rather than hiking shorts.

She carefully eased the can out of the mound of dirt with her handkerchief, managing to burn the tip of a finger, which she ignored. Now she had to wait for the water to cool sufficiently and glanced to the west at the setting sun, guessing that she had another hour of daylight. She hoped to heat the six-ounce can at least three more times, plus an extra for the night, before dark, and the sure thought of removing this manic thirst made her feel giddy. It was so utterly ordinary, this thirst, that it returned her solidly to earth, the only concern being for immediate comfort.

"Laurel, I'm doing rather well, considering. I was just wondering if there were rattlesnakes around here."

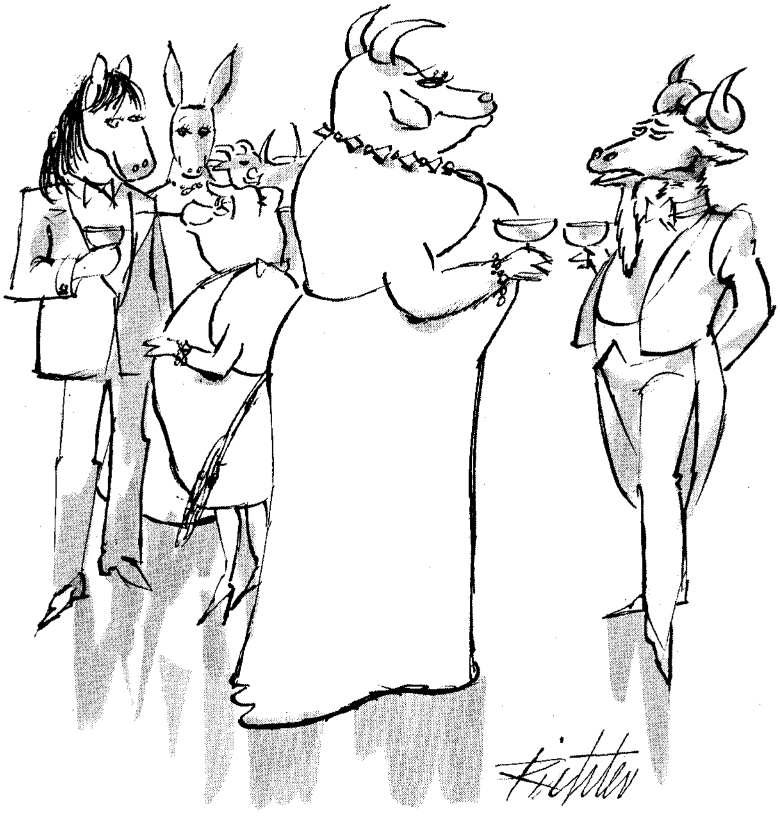
"That's unlikely. They prefer rocky hillsides, where they can find rodents. I heard there are a few moccasins in the southern part of the state, but they'd be a rarity, and you're well up in the middle. The main problem might be mosquitoes."

"I've already noticed that. At what point does the daughter become the mother?"

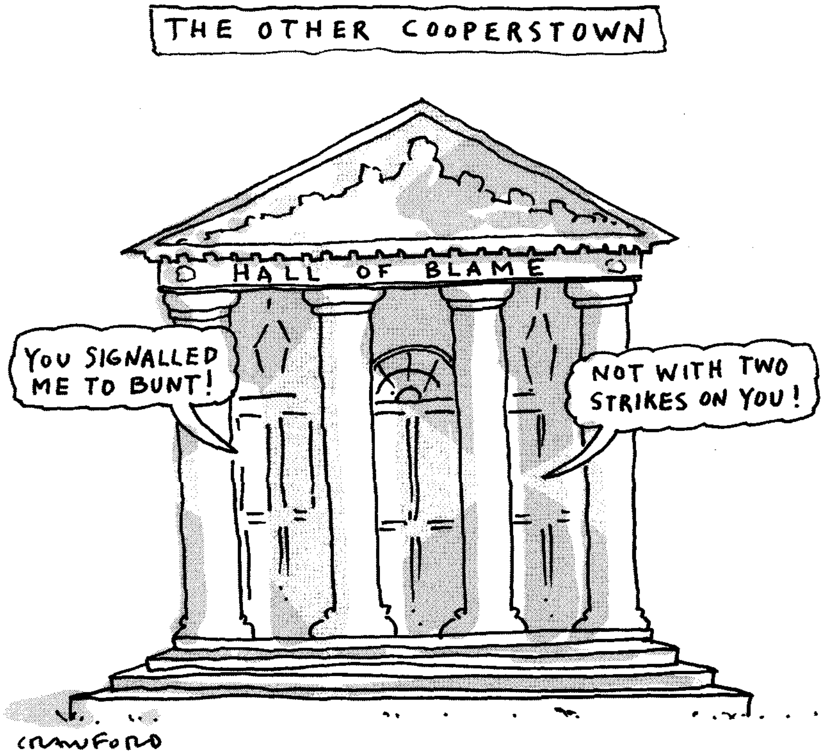
"You're not ready for that. I bet you still get a few passes."

"Perhaps. I certainly don't want to talk about it to my daughter."

"Back in high school my friends and



"I may be biased, but I believe goat cheese is superior."


THE OTHER COOPERSTOWN
HALL OF BLAME
YOU SIGNALLED ME TO BUNT!
NOT WITH TWO STRIKES ON YOU!
CRAWFORD

I used to wonder if you and Zilpha had some boyfriends stashed on your outings. We thought you two were so thrilling."

"Everyone suspected that we might have gentlemen friends, and it was fun to let them think so. It used to drive your father a bit crazy, and I'd say, 'But dear, you go on business trips at least once a month and I don't wonder about you.' "

"You never suspected him?"

"I didn't really care."

"Then why did you hold on so long?"

"I had my friends, my books, dogs, garden, my children. Why does a husband have to be the absolute center of a married woman's life?"

"I don't know, but they always are. Actually, I know you're the center of his life, with making money a close second."

"Are you suddenly getting warm about your father?"

"No, it was only an observation."

"I'm the center like a prized possession. Remember when I wouldn't go to any more fund-raisers after I was introduced as a 'prominent Republican wife,' with no name attached? It seemed to stand for something quite out of focus."

"That was funny, also sad. I'm sure you were sorely missed. Dad always liked to pretend we had more money than we did. I mean, we had plenty, so why pretend? Kevin pointed out that my trust would have grown as much in a savings account as it did under Dad's care."

"Was Kevin upset?"

"Not at all. It's just Dad always treats him as if as a veterinarian he has his head in the clouds, when if you pull a difficult calf or help a mare drop a foal it's pretty realistic."

"Businessmen would be utterly destroyed if they didn't think they were the most practical men on earth. Lawyers tend to be that way, too. Zilpha's husband used to say that a lawyer is society's proctologist. Sadly, that was the only charming thing he ever said."

"You miss her terribly, don't you? And Sammy, too?"

"More than I dreamed possible. Strangely, I couldn't have done this if they had still been with me. It was a pleasure to give so much to them, because I loved them. Then they were gone, and I had to do something. I just tasted my hot water. It's somewhere between truck-stop coffee and the average veal glacé in a Detroit restaurant, the kind where they slip in a bouillon cube. I'd better get busy now."

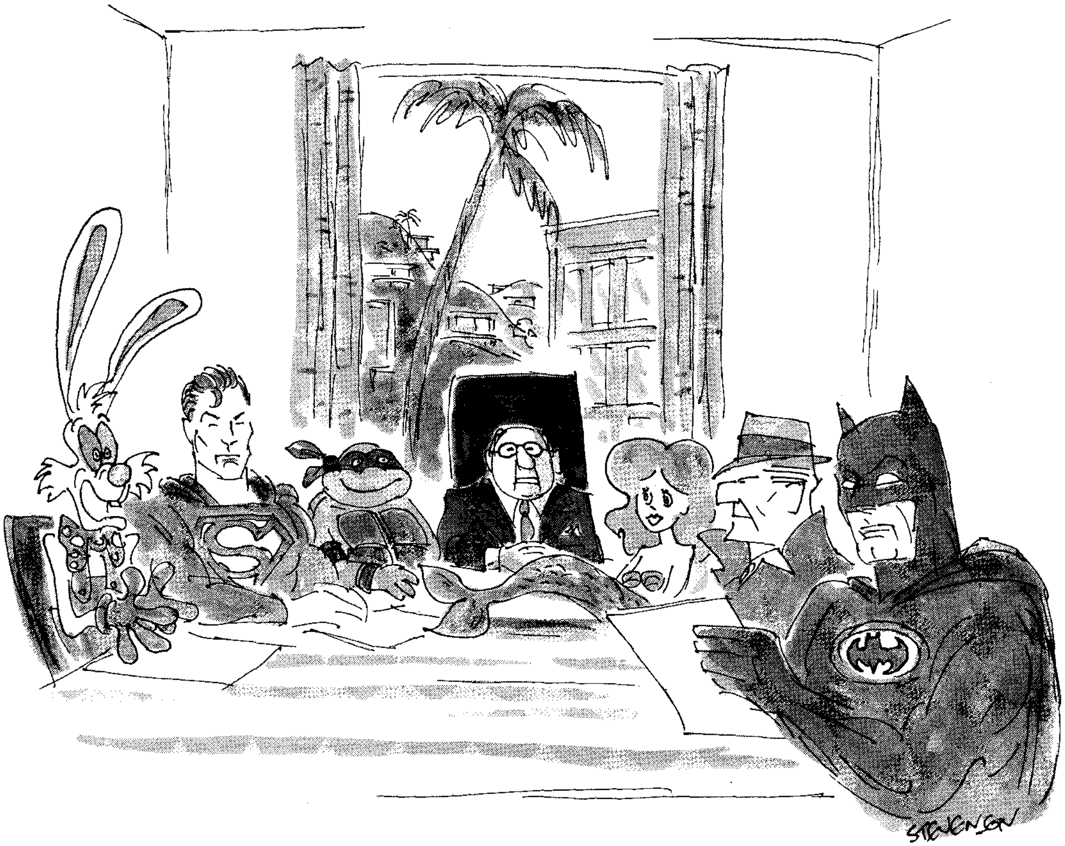
"Keep me posted. Remember, you don't have to spend the night. There's still time to make it back to the highway if you hurry."

"No thanks, dear."

Clare finished her first can of water with pleasure, spitting out a bit of the grit that had accumulated at the bottom, then setting out for the Guernsey to get the next. It was similar to weeding her large herb garden, because she didn't think about anything except what she was doing, though thoughts might float easily in and out. The difference was that when she didn't try to hold on to the thoughts the bad ones disappeared on their own accord.

On the third trip, when her thirst was somewhat abated and the sun was beginning to set, she made her way down the riverbank searching for more wood. Just past the single cottonwood tree there was a large branch that she tugged away from clinging vines as if she had found the mother lode. If she could keep a small fire going she wouldn't miss a flashlight so much. If you're going to leave your husband, take a flashlight. That was about as sensible as the rules could get for the time being. A movement in the vines startled her and an opossum scurried out, looked at Clare, and flopped over in fake death. She had seen this twice before in her garden back home and it was difficult not to draw certain parallels, amusing ones, though if you played dead long enough the act of coming back to life was questionable. Of the seven women who had been in her tennis group (the A Class) a decade ago, four had been divorced in the past few years and none were doing very well. But it was too easy to be smug about her own passivity, the way she let the years drift gently by, relying on Zilpha's natural ebullience, two long walks a day with Sammy, hours of reading and cooking—the latter more for herself than for Donald, who ate everything she cooked him with equal gusto.

Back at the campsite she coaxed the dwindling fire back to life, broke up the branches, and put the sticks in a neat pile, stooping there, impatient for the water to boil. There was a reassuring chatter of birds, but she guessed there was at most only a half hour of daylight left. She put down a layer of corn leaves, then pulled up enough dry marsh grass to cover them, to protect her sleep from the ground's dampness. She took off her skirt and blouse, hung them on a stick, and held the clothes over the fire to draw out the slight amount of moisture left from her river



"Everybody here? Let's get started."

• •

plunge. It was a balmy night, but with nothing to wrap herself in but her own arms she was sure she would be cold by morning.

It was so strange to stand there nearly naked, feeling the smoke and heat purl up her body, with just enough darkness to make her legs and tummy golden. She felt good enough for the moment not to have to think of herself as an admirable person. If Zilpha had been there she would have been smoking the cigarettes that killed her. It had been her nature to defy everything, just as many intelligent men drink themselves to death. Right up until the last day Zilpha had said she had no regrets about dying, and on the last day she had only joked, "I'm not absolutely sure this is a good idea. Too bad I can't call and let you know." With her husband her eyes had brimmed with tears and she had merely shaken her head. It was by common consent the lousiest marriage in the neighborhood and everyone wondered why they bothered to hang on.

Clare stuck her clothes stake in the ground and decided once again to try to make sense out of the Tao, especially a single line Frank had thought so wonderful. The line was disappointingly sparse: "Thus whoever is stiff and inflexible is a disciple of death." Frank had said that he'd spent thirty years being angry at the United States Department of Agriculture over grain prices and all of that energy had been wasted, and the anger had vastly accelerated his back problems. Clare and Frank had been talking in the shade of an enormous boulder—hiding, in fact, from the counsellor, who was being especially captious and unnerving that day, or so they thought. The twelve of them were being led on a "meditation hike" and were supposed to be dispersed in a boulder-strewn valley to sit alone and concentrate on a double-faced question: "Do you want to live?" and, simply enough, "Who dies?" There was also an admonition to keep alert for rattlesnakes. To break up the tedium and anguish of the questions, Frank and Clare, through hand signals, had met behind the boulder for a chat.

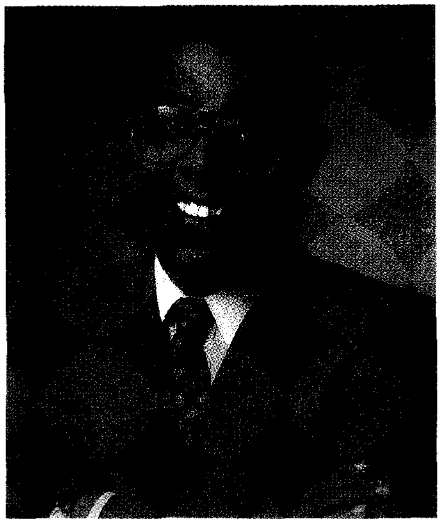
"What the hell does that hippie mean? Suicide's not Christian."

"It's not supposed to be something to get angry about," Clare had said without a good deal of conviction. "He says that our bodies are quarrelling with themselves and that makes them hard to heal. He's not the U.S.D.A. They don't wear earrings."

Frank had smiled, then developed a stricken look, so Clare massaged his back and shoulders. Clare had seen one of his seizures the first day of the clinic and doubted that she could handle one behind the boulder. He had twisted on the floor of the dining area, and at one point his entire weight was supported by his heels and the back of his head, his trunk thrusting upward. Now his back softened from iron to clay under her hands and they embraced for a moment, but he began weeping after he kissed her. At the time she wished she had the gumption to seduce him despite the consequences, whatever they might be. After that incident Frank was embarrassed when talking to her, as if he had behaved badly, and she didn't know how to tell him otherwise. At the end of the clinic Frank's wife picked him up, and she looked overplump and spiteful to Clare.

Back at the fire Clare felt the warm, smoking clothes and decided she wasn't inflexible, at least compared to Donald, but maybe one thing wrong with marriage, or smallish social settings, was that the comparisons were so limited. Her brother felt he never drank more than his three best friends, but the four of them had all nearly drunk themselves to death, and were at present all leading lights in the A.A. for the Detroit area. The sheer taffy in self-awareness exhausted her. Saying that you were more flexible than your husband was small-minded dogshit; putting it that way made her laugh out loud. She wanted more life, not "Robert's Rules of Order." Crossing a fence was certainly a start, a flexible one at that. It occurred to Clare that while Zilpha swore occasionally, and Laurel repeatedly, she had never really learned how. "Fuck you, Donald, you jerk-off," she whispered to the gathering dark, but the oath was froth. "Jerk-off" was what the boys who worked at the neighborhood gas station called

"DO IT RIGHT."



Victor Simon
Senior Petroleum Engineer
Texaco

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each other. They always glanced down at her legs while they were doing the windshield. If she was wearing a tennis skirt they did an especially good job on the windshield. One day the boy she thought most attractive had looked up from her legs with a mournful stare, which she returned rather boldly. For a moment she desperately wanted to take him home and do whatever.

“Why didn’t you?” Laurel laughed. Quite suddenly a blush rose to Clare’s face. She put on her warm, smoky clothes in defense. They felt wonderful against her skin.

“You’re simple-minded if you think I’m going to talk to you about it.”

“Suit yourself. What I’m trying to say is that your night is going to be long enough without feeling guilty about something so innocent. If you get hungry just roll a couple of ears of that field corn in that wet clay and lay them at the edge of the fire. By the time the clay dries and hardens, the corn will be ready. Not great, but better than nothing. I love you. Good night.”

Clare picked two ears of corn and rolled them in the remains of a mud puddle until they were covered with a thickish layer of clay. It was a messy business and she dried her hands before the fire until she could flake off the clay.

“Be honest with yourself,” Laurel chimed in from the dark.

“Why? O.K., then. At the moment that boy reminded me of a young English instructor I studied with as a freshman. I knew we both wanted to make love, but there were rules against it, and besides we were too shy. When I came back as a sophomore I found out he had committed suicide that summer in New York City. Every time I got a crush on someone, they moved to New York. I chose badly.”

“Did he leave a note?”

“Not that I know of. Once, we had coffee at a cafeteria and he gave me some bad advice. He told me that literature was so rich with possibility that I could safely ignore life itself. I asked him why Pasternak had said that, despite all appearances, it took a lot of volume to fill a life. He told me Pasternak’s reputation had been discounted by the higher critics. Two of his colleagues passed our table and one of them winked at him as if I were his bimbo.”

“Which is what you wanted to be.”

“You might say that. When I met your father I made sure he didn’t get away.”

“I know all about that one. It fails to interest. The corn should be roasted by now.”

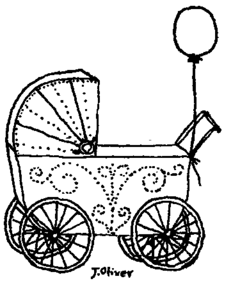
“Good night, dear.”

“Keep in touch if you get lonely.”

“I will.”

Clare tapped the baked clay of one ear with her knuckles to no effect, then used a stone to break it. The green shucks steamed on the night air and she waited for them to cool.

THE corn was much better than Clare had reason to expect, lacking sweetness but full-flavored. It was now dark, but a three-quarter moon was rising, a cream-colored globe barely above the horizon. A full moon would have been too dramatic, she reflected. One of the grandest times ever with her father had been a long walk one night in the summer during a full moon up near their cottage on Burt Lake. They had taken the long way through a virgin oak forest down to a Chippewa graveyard near the lake, and her father, who was inventive for an accountant, made up new variations on the Robin Hood stories. When they reached the white picket fence of the cemetery, she clutched his hand tightly as they looked out over the crosses at the sheen of the moon on the lake. At this juncture of their customary walk her father always tried to spook her by saying in a whisper, “Perhaps there’ll be a message from the spirit world,” but this time when he finished they heard from far out on the lake the tremulous wail of a loon, as if it had been arranged. He clutched her hand as hard as she did his, then they laughed at their fright and did unsuccessful loon imitations.



Clare considered saving the second ear of corn for morning, then thought why bother, since she was surrounded by virtually millions of them. The idea that she probably wouldn’t have married Donald if her father hadn’t died was less interesting at the moment than Robin Hood. Dr. Roth had given her a book of poems called “Roots and Branches,” by Robert Duncan, whom she had never heard of: the poems were splendid though difficult, and now she could remember an entire passage she had copied in her ledger:

Robin Hood in the greenwood
outside
Christendom faces peril as if it
were a friend.
Foremost we admire the outlaw
who has the strength of his own
lawfulness. How we loved him
in childhood and hoped to abide
by his code
that took life as its law!

Clare stirred the fire and wondered if her diminished pile of sticks would last, but then even the slightest of fires would suffice to leaven the balmy night. She feared the dissociation of waking up in the middle of the night to total blackness, though the moon should be a modest compensation. She moved the wood to where she could reach it from her green cave, and firmed some dirt around her can of water so she wouldn’t inadvertently tip it over. She wished she felt a little stronger when she curled up for sleep, and thought again of the notion of prayer, but she lacked the solace of a religion that does not depend on ignoring the human condition. When she had prayed as a child, God’s face in her mind was similar to her father’s—the graying hair, the furrowed brow, the look that was essentially kind, but did not indulge trivialities. Her childhood prayer from Sunday school was simple enough: “Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take.” Curled there on her bed of leaves and grass, Clare thought this prayer lacked a great deal in terms of reassurance. She didn’t want the Lord to take her soul in the night; she wanted to go to Europe without having to listen to Donald’s incessant business prattle. In the nave of Notre-Dame he had whispered, “Remind me to make a call,” as if he ever forgot. In the Uffizi he couldn’t stop saying, “I wonder what this would bring at Parke-Bernet.”

The world itself was a marketing possibility. Before he had played his “Tracking the Blues” tape today in the car, he had interrupted a favorite Stravinsky passage to say that local acreage was recovering from the 1985 downturn, though Donald, Jr., had said pork bellies still had the flutters but would really firm up by Labor Day. A typical remark from him would be something to the effect that the black-walnut tree in their back yard was worth seven thousand bucks as furniture veneer, and that walnut-tree thieves were circulating through the Midwest, waiting for the innocent to go on vacation. Curiously enough, Donald didn't mind when she asked him to write a large check for the American Indian College Fund or the N.A.A.C.P., two of her favorite charities, saying something like "those folks got the wrong end of the stick," as if all American history had been a business deal. Maybe it had been. Donald had tried to hedge her support of the Nature Conservancy and Greenpeace because he felt the bird-watchers and "little old ladies in tennis shoes" were cramping certain resort complexes in northern Michigan that were otherwise good investment potentials. Clare reminded him that if she wasn't already a little old lady in tennis shoes it could clearly be seen on the horizon.

But how could you blame Donald for so fulsomely taking on the colors of the workaday world? Perhaps the lines were drawn more clearly than she had ever thought, and that was why she lay curled in a thicket staring at the weak light of a cottonwood fire. One autumn afternoon when she was helping her father comb burrs out of the long hair of their English setters, she had asked him why the Bible said it was easier for a camel to get through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter Heaven. He treated the question gravely and said that if all your mind is full of is money you become crazy, and that insane people live in a private hell without even knowing it, and that insane rich people created a hell for a lot of other people without knowing or caring about it. As simplistic as this seemed, Clare still essentially believed it. Her father said it and he looked like God, though he had done a lot of bad things to her without knowing it. He couldn't have done them on purpose.

Clare sat up, as a lump had begun to form beneath her breastbone at this recall of certain childhood events. She put a fresh stick on the fire and watched its brief, feverish blaze. She always read herself to sleep, and the absence of this routine was haunting. She would have read the footnotes in the Tao if there had been enough light. She studied a book of matches from a truck-stop restaurant in Illinois called R Place, where they had stopped for lunch on the way out. The restaurant gave a special award: inscribed on a plaque the name of anyone who could eat a four-pound hamburger. The waitress had told Clare that the meat patty was only a little over three pounds but the bun and all the fixings brought the weight up to an even four. For some reason this disgusted Donald, who thought the idea "low-life." The waitress pointed out a burly trucker on the other side of the room who was on his way to victory. Clare excused herself to wash her hands and passed by the trucker as she headed for the bathroom, though the trucker was well out of the way. She paused at the table.

"I hope you manage. It looks wonderful," she had said.

"You look pretty damn good yourself. I'd give you a bite but I'd be disqualified."

She had waved and passed on, wondering if the man had a wife and what she looked like.

Now she reached into her bag for her beret, pulling it on tight for extra comfort. She took off her watch and stowed it in the bag, thinking that if she kept looking at it time itself would swallow her.

When and if she emerged, her friends and acquaintances back in the neighborhood were bound to prate of "nervous breakdown" or "depression" during countless phone calls and lunches. One of the favorite local psychiatrists was an ardent pill pusher in his efforts to remove any socially embarrassing symptoms. The probable cause in her case would be obvious to all—the deaths of Zilpha and Sammy—but her marriage, which was considered solid, would not be questioned. The same psychiatrist had offered nothing when she had gone to him, troubled about Donald, Jr.,'s apparent lack of morals in school. He seduced innocent, homely girls and kept a tally, cheated wherever possible on homework, plagiarized term papers, and as a school leader made problems for teachers who didn't give him good grades. The psychiatrist had dismissed all of this as Donald, Jr.,'s effort to take shortcuts into his father's world, and said that when sufficient negative reinforcement came from his "peer group" the behavior would cease. Unfortunately for this theory, Donald, Jr., continued to be widely admired as charming and capable. His father had hoped to get him into an Ivy League college, but his S.A.T. scores were too mediocre, so strings were pulled and he was accepted at the University of Michigan, where he became the president of his fraternity. Donald, Jr., had always been impeccably dressed, even for a trip to the 7-Eleven, while Laurel, who had gone to Northwestern, was a slob, drank beer and smoked marijuana, and graduated summa cum laude. She had also been the best student in her class at Michigan State's veterinary school, neither of which honors made more than a cursory dent in her father's consciousness.

There was a rustling in the thicket off to the left and Clare's pulse quickened, but then a barred owl called from the cottonwood and Clare supposed the other creatures were making adjustments to keep out of the owl's way. At one time Donald, Jr.,'s character had puzzled her, because she was blinded by the fact that he had been a much more loving child than Laurel—helping Clare in the garden, arranging his Audubon cards, building birdhouses, acting as a deft little "sous-chef" when she cooked. It was as if during puberty he had waked up, looked around, and decided to become a child of his time.

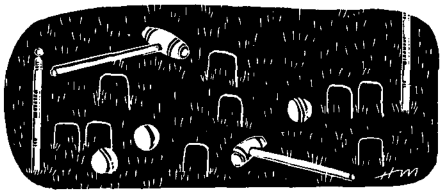
Clare wriggled closer to the opening for a look at the moon and stars, then sat up and stuffed her bag with dry grass to make a pillow. This camping had its moments, but she was claustrophobic enough to dread tents, elevators, and theatre lines, and the stars and moon were a tonic after the dark lid of her thicket. There was still the slightest twinge of pain in her left lobe, and she monitored the size of the speck of green light. She heard a strain of Monteverdi, then a bar of "The Firebird," and the light diminished. With Laurel the light was steady, but the images of Donald and Donald, Jr., increased it. She searched for good memories to control her fear of another attack.

When they were first married and Donald had just entered the firm as an assistant office manager, he still wore his lumberjack shirts in the evening and on weekends. He hadn't finished his senior thesis, an essay, ironically enough, on Thorstein Veblen's "Theory of the Leisure Class," so through the long winter of the pregnancy Clare had actually written most of it for him. She thought Donald talked brilliantly but didn't write well, while she was shy but wrote well, if a little too carefully. Some of Donald's politically active friends from Michigan State were back in the Detroit area and they all met at least once a week. Donald would regale them with stories about the "bourgeoisie" at work and in the neighborhood near their Birmingham apartment.

Clare's mother had busied herself in her grief over her husband's death by drinking even more than usual and, once Clare was married, shopping for a perfect home for her daughter. Clare's brother Ted, younger by five years, was in his junior year at Kent, a prep school in Connecticut, his fourth in four years. When her mother had finally found the house, she and Clare had spent a great deal of time overseeing the redecorating. Clare was unconcerned and felt the project was good therapy for her mother. Meanwhile, she and Donald and their scrubby friends ate at expensive Polish, Italian, Chinese, and Greek restaurants, and went to the wonderful movies of those times: all of Bergman, Fellini, and the early Antonioni. They marched with other civil-rights protesters, hand in hand with blacks, and listened fervently each Sunday morning to the wild-eyed sermons of the Reverend C. L. Franklin, Aretha's father. They actually shook hands with the great man himself, Martin Luther King, Jr. He had said to Donald, "Keep up the good work, brother," and Donald had beamed. Like so many others, they had been paralyzed with fear by the Cuban missile crisis. Clare had been reading William Faulkner's "The Reivers" when she heard on the radio that President Kennedy had been shot in Dallas. Donald rushed home from work and they wept together, glued to the icy, catatonic replays on television.

One evening after Laurel was born but before they had moved into the house, all of their friends had come over for dinner and to listen to blues and jazz records on their new stereo. Donald discoursed on Charlie Parker, Muddy Waters, B. B. King, and the primitive disks recorded by Alan Lomax before carefully putting the needle on the record. Among their favorites were Forest City Joe singing "Chevrolet" and Vera Hall's "Can't You Hear That Wild Ox Moan?" Clare thought that perhaps that evening had been the beginning of the end. Laurel had been sick with a cold, and Clare was a distinctly amateur cook. Hearing of the party, her mother had volunteered to send over a little something from the club. Two waiters showed up at 8 P.M. sharp, when the guests were groggy from Gallo Burgundy and famished to despair. Clare went into the bathroom, embarrassed to the point of tears when the food arrived. She primped herself, wiped away her tears, blew her nose, and emerged when she heard the shouts of joy from the other room. There were only ten to feed but her mother had sent over a huge prime-rib roast, a Smithfield ham, side dishes including six dozen oysters, a mixed case of French wine, and two cases of imported beer. Their friends were utterly thrilled with the food, greeting it without a single negative comment. They ate, drank, danced, and laughed, and at the bleary end of the party Clare wrapped up ample packages of leftovers for each of the guests.

In the morning, they had the first serious argument of their marriage, over, oddly enough, a novel by James Baldwin and a profile of Malcolm X in a Detroit newspaper. A week later they moved into the house and things were never the same again, nor were they meant to be. Despite his jokes about work, Donald had become a well-concealed predator, a skilled manipulator—something he had learned as a political activist—and was earning a degree in accounting at night school at the University of Detroit. During the longish evenings alone Clare had begun reading again and hadn't stopped since. Over the long haul she couldn't have endured Donald without her books. Two years after Laurel, who had been nicknamed Papoose, Donald, Jr., was born, and when Donald arrived late at the hospital with three dozen roses he announced, in his first tailored suit, that he had been elected a member of the Detroit Athletic Club. Clare put down the book she was reading, a novel called "The Deer Park," by Norman Mailer, in which there were no deer to be found but lots of intriguing bad behavior. She remembered looking closely at Donald—a long pause during which she waited patiently for him to mention the birth of his son.



CLARE dozed for a half hour, waking fearfully with a deep chest pain, then smiling because she had rolled over and clenched a fist against her heart, mistaking the sensation for an attack. The fire was down to embers, and she decided to use the largest of the sticks in hope that it would last until she slept long and deeply. She strained above the hiss and sputter of the fire to hear something just on the edge of the audible. There it was again. And again. A dog barking far to the southeast, in some barnyard, she imagined, at the outer edge of the arc thrown by a porch light, the dog's body stiffening as it barked at the night as Sammy's body had always done just before bedtime. It was an unimaginably comforting sound and her eyes teared. How wonderful it would have been to have the dog with her, not for protection (Sammy's bravura was mostly fake) but for companionship. Sammy had been afraid of cats and snakes, but her thunderous bark warned away possible intruders and door-to-door salesmen and halted the irksome approach of Jehovah's Witnesses. For unclear reasons, she liked the Federal Express man but loathed the one for U.P.S. The furnace repairman once threw her into a fearsome rage, which caused Clare to offer an embarrassed apology after she had closed Sammy up in the garage. The man, who was about her own age, and black, looked at her strangely, then offered his hand. It turned out they had been in a civil-rights march together well over twenty years before, and the man's little son, who had played with Laurel in Hart Plaza, now taught high-school science in Ypsilanti. When the repairman left it wasn't a happy occasion, because the intervening years acquired the sharpest of focusses. The man had mentioned seeing her name in the Detroit *News*, where she had been referred to rather nastily as a "well-heeled liberal environmentalist."

At dinner, when she had brought up the repairman Donald became vague and nearly morose for a minute. It had been difficult for him lately, since one of his minor saving graces was an abiding concern for probity in government, and the successive scandals in Pentagon procurement, HUD, and the enormity of the savings-and-loan mess disturbed him deeply. She tended to go easy on him on the rare occasions when he became vulnerable. They usually avoided political discussions, in any case, settling for cancelling each other's vote at the polls.

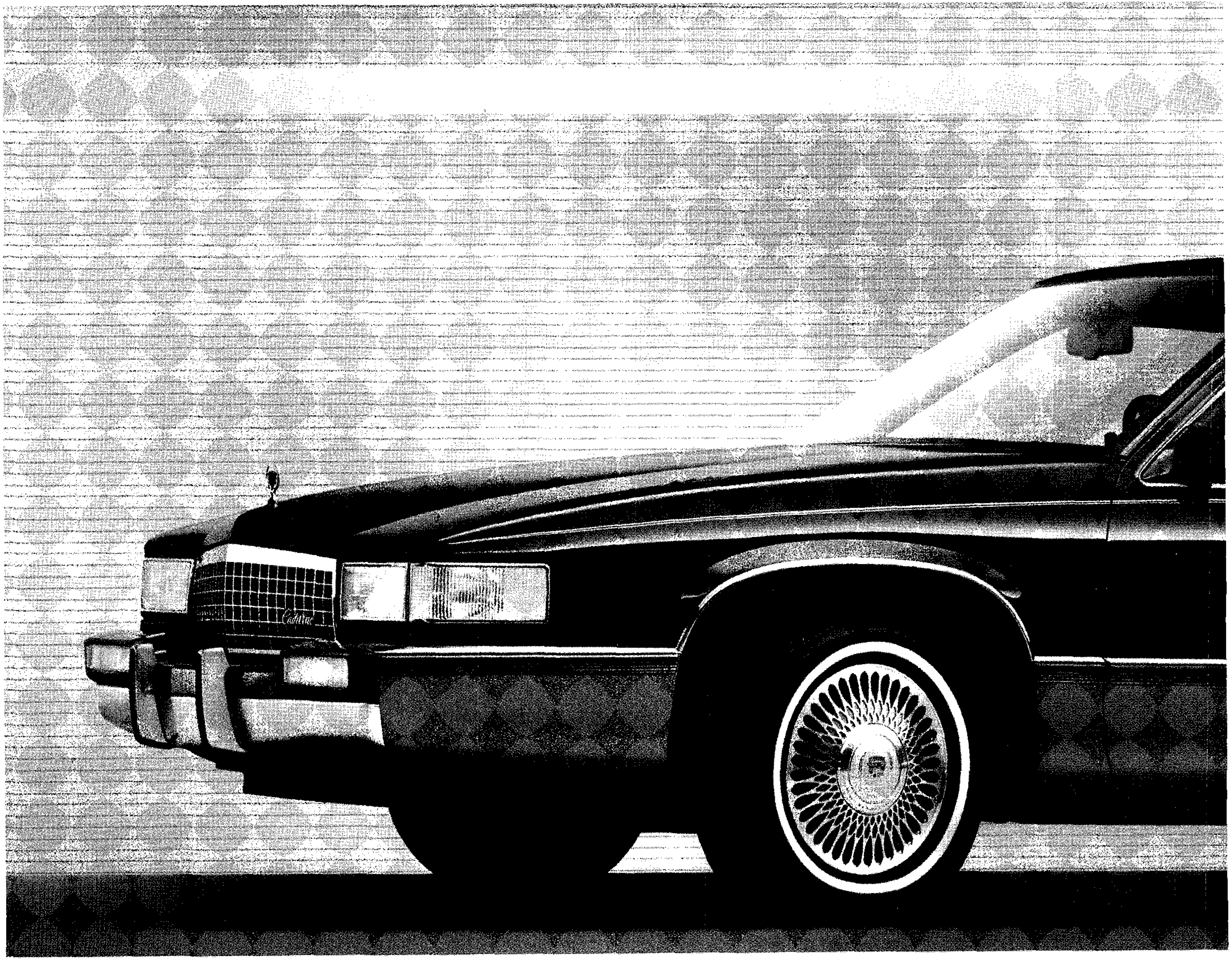
Laurel, however, was merciless, and could redden Donald's face by saying that she wanted to go to Costa Rica and speak Latin just like Dan Quayle. Laurel had never been particularly interested in novels or poetry, and her single literary quote was from Yeats: "The best lack all conviction, while the worst are full of passionate intensity." That appeared to sum up Laurel's feelings toward the political world. Donald, Jr., tended merely to be a more cynical version of his father. Clare herself had come to a point where all the highest hopes of her twenties had been diminished to the degree that she was relegated to writing checks to distant organizations and trying to save the occasional pond, creek, or sorry woodlot in Michigan. The heady idealism of the Labor State had died with Walter Reuther, and the prospects for social services and the environment had become dismal in the face of lobbyists' opportunism.

"*Honestly, Kate—can you picture* us *in a shopping mall?*"

Fortunately, the thought of politics had made her sleepy—though "sodden" might be a better word, she thought. She heard the dog's bark a little more clearly, and there was an eerie moment when she thought it might be the ghost of her own dog, but the image of it barking out its loneliness under the porch light was dominant. The stars and the moon didn't seem quite high enough, and she remembered Donald's chagrin when she had insisted that they add a master bedroom with a sixteen-foot ceiling. Clare couldn't stay in newish hotels where the windows didn't open. But she often regretted her mother's gift of a house so soon after they were married. Money tends to derange people when it arrives so abruptly, and the house wasn't, ultimately, fair to Donald. The ceilings were wonderfully high in Europe but the less equitable society there made her nervous after a few weeks. When this was over, she intended to live in an apartment or in a smallish house on the far edge of a town. It would be near a woods, and farm country. She would find a job in a library or bookstore where she could make herself useful—a sense she had lost since Donald, Jr., had gone off to college. The woman who ran the local office for the charity in Costa Rica had called herself an overworked volunteer, and that sounded good to Clare. The woman had advised against visiting the child, and she was right. The family had been fearful that something might be taken from them, that they were being judged, but they had warmed to Zilpha, and the atmosphere eventually became relaxed in the one-room stucco cottage near Puntarenas.

Clare traced a finger across the dew gathering on her face, and her thoughts became more random. She had learned enough Spanish to translate the thank-you notes from the child, who was now in her early teens. The parents had been shy during the visit, but the second child, a boy of seven, who was perfectly round, had thought everything about Zilpha was funny. Clare's mother definitely had been a problem drinker, and Clare thought again of the nightmares caused by rich, overgenerous alcoholics. The new, homely word "yuppie" had been devised for the grandchildren of the Depression, and she wondered how gracefully they would age. Another ugly word was "schmucks." Last Christmas when Donald, Jr., had come home from Chicago with a rather pretty but vacant girl, he told Clare her "main problem" was that she expected too much from people when they were really only schmucks.

Sleep was too far away for the clumsiest of prayers. She got up, put another stick on the fire, and looked at her bed in the brief yellow flare-up. It was the nest of a not very skilled animal, a temporary measure like a deer bed in high grass. She turned, and the wide aisle she had come down a lifetime ago was now aligned with the moon—a darkling path between silvered leaves that a breeze was lightly rustling. It was a path from a children's book of the twenties, the golden age of illustration, lovely, foreboding, irresistible. She decided to walk herself to sleep, as she had done so often with her dog at



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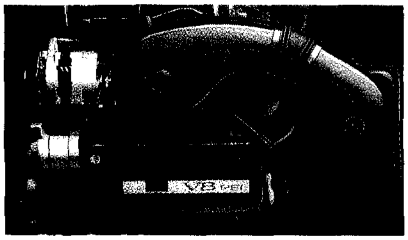
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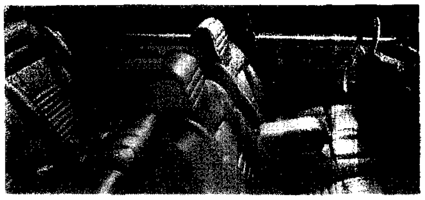
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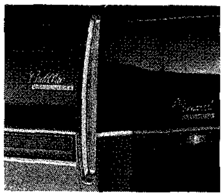
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home. Donald had bought her a small pistol, which she never took along, because the presence of a pistol would have changed the nature of the walk. And Sammy, though still frightened by cats, thought herself a grizzly bear after dark. Besides, Clare was in fine trim, and asked Donald why they’d remained in so otiose a neighborhood if it wasn’t the safest in the Detroit area. She could tell he didn’t know what “otiose” meant, but pretended he did as he watched Pisor, his favorite late-news baritone. *Oh, forget Donald,* she reminded herself. *I am here because he isn’t.*

She set off at a relaxed but steady pace, fixed on the moon as if she were trying to walk to a place directly under it. After a few hundred yards, she quickened her gait and felt that delightful sense that her joints had become oiled, and the night air was sweet and drinkable. Dr. Roth liked to say that the overexamined life was not worth living, and that the quasi-upper-class life had become the most banal of self-improvement videos. God damn, but her mind was so exhausted with trying to hold the world together, tired of being the living glue for herself, as if by her letting go great pieces of her life would shatter and fall off in mockery of the apocalypse. Or her mind would simply deflate, letting off its sour air like a punctured rubber ball. She was delighted when she thought she saw the moon move a bit, as it must. Time moved the moon. You should be lucky enough to be there when the tree falls in the desert. Dr. Roth, who was fascinated with the history of religions, gave her what he called a “nice Jewish present”: “The Unvarnished Gospels,” a new translation by Gaus. The language was so stark and commonplace that it was almost unreadable.

The world is likely commonplace, she thought. There was the amusing memory of the second term of her sophomore year, when East Lansing was frozen in dirty ice. She had met a boy in the periodicals room who was reading her favorite literary journal, *Botteghe Oscure*, edited in Rome by Marguerite Caetani. Clare’s secret ambition was to become Marguerite Caetani’s secretary and meet the French poet René Char, whose long poem “To a Tensed Serenity” was in the latest issue. The boy reading the journal was shabby, condescending, an avowed “beatnik” who smelled strongly of potato chips. She found him exciting, though he looked down his pale, mottled nose at her pleated skirt and gray cashmere cardigan. The boy let her sit near him at Kewpee’s, a cafeteria favored by the intellectual and artistic types, the latter having the advantage of smelling like paint rather than something else.

She and the boy would sit as close as possible to a table of seniors dominated by a strange-looking young man who wore Army surplus or, on alternate days, the kind of suit and chesterfield coat worn in her home town. He was even more vigorous and arrogant than her suicidal instructor, and she and the boy listened raptly as the young man droned on about Rimbaud, Verlaine, Laforgue, Péguy, Alain-Fournier, Camus, Kierkegaard, Yesenin, and the “obvious” structure of “Finnegans Wake.” He had taken to glancing at her legs now and then, and once loudly told a story about fucking a fat, drunken waitress who wore an ankle bracelet that spelled “Herbert.” One day the man looked over at her and asked her if she had read Dostoyevski, especially the new translation of his “Notebooks,” wherein there was an entry about a girl who, one cold St. Petersburg afternoon, drank a bottle of wine and committed suicide out of boredom. She answered that she hadn’t read Dostoyevski, but Turgenev’s “Sportsman’s Sketches” was one of her favorites (it was actually her father’s favorite). “That’s good,” he said, “but read ‘Fathers and Sons.’ I’m actually Bazarov. Get off your pretty ass and read all of Dostoyevski or you’ll become a punching bag for some Grosse Pointe fraternity boy.” Then the man stood up and announced to his cronies that it was time to get drunk and play pool. On the way out, the man paused by her chair and pronounced loudly that she was “edible,” which confused her somewhat.

After she had said goodbye to the boy, she cut a class and went immediately to the campus bookstore and bought all of the Dostoyevski in the Modern Library editions, the Constance Garnett translations. She read “The Idiot,” “The Gambler,” “Notes from Underground,” “The Possessed,” “Crime and Punishment,” and “The Brothers Karamazov.” Her eyes were hot red balls in her head, but her life was changed. The great Russian had devoured another piece of her each time she wept over a hero or heroine, a grand conception, the marriage of Heaven and Hell that was his peculiar genius, and had spat her out in bones and gristle. But after she and the beatnik boy had returned to the cafeteria on three successive days they finally heard that the young man had suffered a nervous breakdown and had run off to New York City, leaving a wife and child in married housing. Clare stayed in her room for a week, until a dorm counsellor escorted her to the campus psychiatric clinic, where a sluggish doctor advised her to construct some effective shields against her emotional life, a project at which she proved most successful.

HER skin was moist and her breathing harder as the darkness of the path ahead yielded to a lighter shade of gray. There was a hissing and clicking, which she might have taken for a flying saucer had she not recognized the sound of irrigation sprinklers from the golf course near her home. The cornfield gave way to another huge field, which she guessed must be soybeans, the sprinklers tossing water into the moonlight as far as she could see to the east. Off to the north were the soundless lights of trucks and cars on Route 80, which at that distance seemed to be travelling slowly, creeping toward Chicago or back west toward Omaha. There was a two-track lane between the soybeans and the corn and she walked south for a while, hoping to see the light of a farmhouse. She wanted to hear the dog bark but there was nothing, and she suspected everyone must be asleep by now. She followed a thumping in the ground to a tall thicket of grass and weeds growing up around the main outlet and valve for the irrigation system. She slid in a big puddle but maintained her balance, the water pleasantly cold on her feet. Where the main pipe curved up and out of the ground there was a wheel to turn the water off and on, and a large connecting pipe to the field, out of which came a steady gout of water from a bad fitting. Clare cupped her hands, pausing to avoid the onset of a headache by letting their warmth cut the water’s icy edge. The water was clean and marvellous after the tea-colored sludge from the creek, and she stooped there drinking until she felt a little bilious.

She slipped off her blouse, skirt, panties, bra, and beret, bathing herself slowly with her hands. She did not feel remotely sorry for herself, though there had been a trace of self-pity earlier. Dr. Roth believed that it was the emotion most injurious to mental and physical health. In the small desert town near the pain clinic, a trinket store sold T-shirts that read "The Pain People," which the patients all bought with much irony and humor.

Clare let the breeze dry her off. People used to say "buck naked" and that's what she was, with more than a twinge of desire for Dr. Roth, whose image had shifted out of the dark in connection with Dostoyevski. She felt quite free to think about making love to him because she knew it would never happen. It would break the etiquette of their affection for each other. For an uncharacteristic few seconds she thought that any farmer would do, or even the trucker who ate the four-pound hamburger. She was nearly dry and thinking about nothing in particular except how smooth and strong her body was for her age, when Dr. Roth arrived again. She had told him about the Dostoyevski incident at the bar of the Townsend Hotel and was miffed when he began laughing.

"Life is so unforgiving when you're nineteen," he said.

"And that makes my sad tale funny?"

"If it's not funny by now, you might have to shoot yourself. That's what I mean by unforgiving. Actually, if you shoot anyone it should be the psychiatrist. All he did was try to lower the ceilings."

"I suppose he was tired of the anguish of hundreds of nineteen-year-olds."

"Then he should have gotten the fuck out of the business. You have to remain vulnerable to treat the vulnerable."

"I'm not so sure he could have said anything valuable."

"Of course he could. He might have said that neurotic intellectuals can be as dangerous as cheese-brained fraternity boys. He could have said if you really wanted the guy you could have closed the deal before you read all the books, but it probably wouldn't have been a good idea."

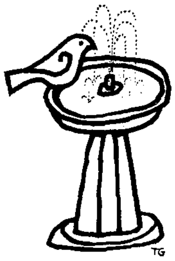
"But I didn't know I could have closed the deal."

"That's ladylike bullshit. You knew that on a particular level. I think it's intriguing that you wanted to fuck someone for their mind. I sure could have used that at nineteen." Dr. Roth nearly blushed at this, the first mention of sex between them, albeit abstract.

"I would have been twenty-six at the time, Sam, already an old lady to a nineteen-year-old boy." She was going to let him fry for a moment.

"That's not the way it works. I'd feel more comfortable talking about religion."

"I remember when I wrote about Apollinaire that he said Jesus held the world's high-altitude record. Is that religious enough?"



"It's definitely safer. We always like to think we're on the verge of danger when we're nearly immobile, don't we?"

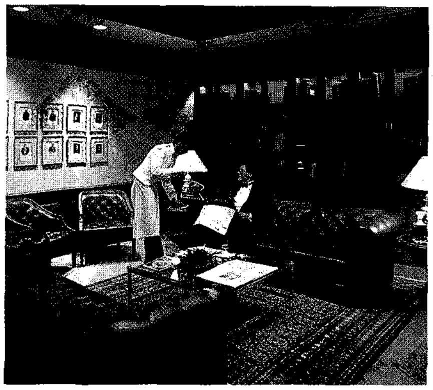
"I suppose so. It's nice to hear that you think of yourself as no more adventurous than I am."

"Now it's my turn to suppose so." He had become strained and distraught. "That's what is finally unforgiving. All of this mythological freedom we grow up on, which we usually get to express standing around in a field wearing a baseball mitt. Or sailing a quarter-million-dollar sailboat down the Detroit River hoping the water won't corrode a hole in the bottom."

On the long walk back to her nest, Clare remembered that Apollinaire had left his wife by merely getting on a train and disappearing, but the reasons for Clare's own escape were too obvious to attribute to the poet. The beauty and dread of time was that nothing was forgiven. Not a single minute. The years she had spent in consideration of this act were not only lost, irretrievable, but this late recognition of the loss was so naïve as to leave her breathless. And in the past ten years she had lacked the convenient excuse of children to care for or the most central excuse of all, poverty. The bondage of most women was caused by not enough money to live on, especially if there were children. And for men there was the perpetual bondage of work and debt, to which was added so frequently a level of spending far beyond their means. In Clare and Donald's class such bondage meant something quite different. Donald had explained to her several personal bankruptcies after Black Monday. A number of members of their club had been making five hundred thousand a year but regularly spent seven hundred. This fact dumbfounded Clare, whose extravagances were limited to a good bottle of wine a day and rare books. On vacations she liked deluxe hotels but flew tourist class, which had always irritated Donald.

Her brother Ted had always seemed a more elegant version of Donald and tended to avoid seeing her except around the holidays, when it was pro forma. He had been to Hazelden in Minnesota three times to dry out, and his last trip was to the Betty Ford clinic, which still didn't do the trick. What finally worked was a panel of doctors' absolute guarantee that he'd die within a year if he continued drinking. His three failed marriages and obsession with racing sailboats in the Great Lakes and the Caribbean had diminished his trusts by two-thirds, so that he was forced to live quite modestly. Clare had loaned him a great deal of money over the years and this made Donald quarrelsome. Her brother liked to make her feel guilty by repeating that she had inherited all the good genes from their father, while he was stuck with the unstable propensities of their mother. Unfortunately, Dr. Roth had said, that was a possibility. The bottom line, Clare thought, was that her brother had been a bully since he was an infant, and had tended to bully himself into the middle of any misery he could find. To an incomprehensible degree he had ruined his life and caused a great deal of pain to his wives and children. He was a living poster child for the evil potential of inherited wealth.

Clare was absurdly happy when she reached her nest, as if returning home from a tiring day. She tended to the remaining embers of the fire, bringing them to life with dry grass and sticks. There was a lightness in her body, brought about by her thinking that she did not give a "flat fuck" if she ever saw her brother or Donald again. It was as simple as that. She then said "Flat fuck" out loud, furthering her intent to take up swearing as a way of releasing pressure. The phrase had been used by April, a rotund woman Clare and Zilpha had met on an outing the October before. It was in a small county park on a lake, where the au-



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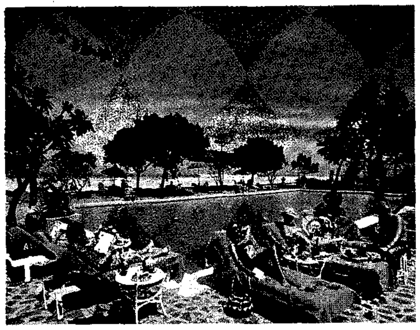

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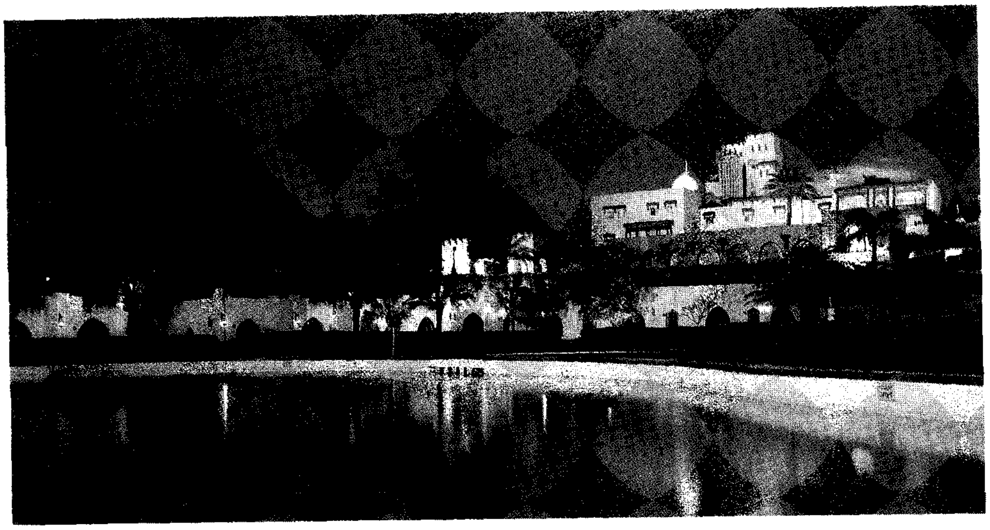

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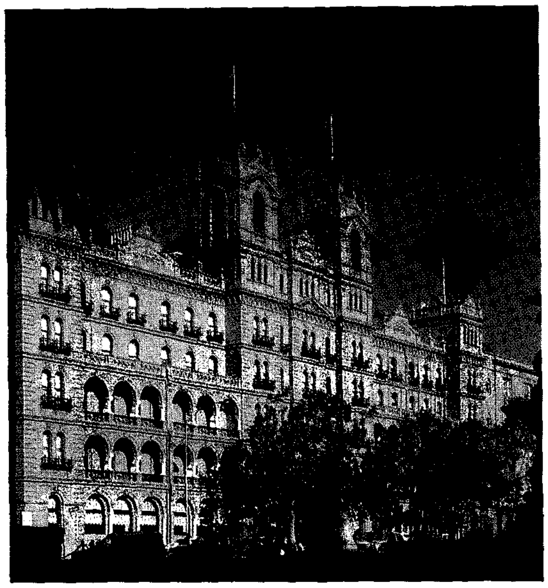


Clockwise, from above: *The Mena House Oberoi, Cairo; the historic Windsor in Melbourne; one of the swimming pools at The Oberoi, Bali; the entrance to The Oberoi Grand, Calcutta; and the Belvedere Library at The Oberoi, Bombay.*

tumn colors were so stridently lovely as to approach banality, with Sammy swimming through the red and yellow leaves on the water. When Sammy finished swimming she came up to Clare and waited patiently for Clare to pick the wet maple leaves off her back, then rolled vigorously in the dust and ashes of a campfire site. Zilpha had started a fire in the small Weber grill *they travelled with, using the dry split* oak that was kept neatly tied in a bundle. From home Clare had brought the salad, the dressing, and a pheasant Donald had shot at a hunting preserve near Holly. The pheasant had looked a bit lean, so she had split it in half before daylight that morning, puréed butter, fresh thyme, and sage, and forced the mixture gently up under the skin while Donald was already barking on the phone in the breakfast nook.

April had been driving down the gravel road when she blew a tire with a shotgun sound not fifty yards from them, and Sammy rushed into the woods, remembering the few times she had been used as a bird dog in her youth. April got out of the car with her five-year-old daughter, a chubby miniature of her mother.

"I can't believe this fucking shit-ass car," April had hollered at a volume that brought Sammy running back from the woods.

Zilpha and Clare had gone to her aid. There was a bald spare tire but no jack among the hundreds of returnable beer cans in the trunk of April's car. Zilpha got the jack from the Toyota and swiftly changed the tire, which amazed April.

"Lady, you could get a job in a garage," April said. She continued to talk, bearing down on the day's problems, with every sentence peppered with phrases polite folks think of as filth. Zilpha and Clare couldn't help beginning to laugh, and April said she was sorry but she always talked that way. Meanwhile, the child was off throwing a stick into the lake for the dog, her voice pealing out, "Bring it back, you son of a bitch." Clare asked April if she'd like a drink or something to eat. April said she had just had lunch but "I could use a fucking drink to turn the day around."

They sat at the picnic table drinking white wine—Clare getting up now and then to tend the broiling pheasant—watching the child wrestle with the wet dog. April was a local and worked as a barmaid up the road. Her ex-husband was a welder in Detroit but was in jail for assault. She had had his checks garnisheed, but he wasn't getting paid in jail, so times were hard. Zilpha took down the information, saying that her husband might be able to look into it. Then April said, "Where do you gals *work?" and there was an embarrassed* silence.

"We're sort of housewives," Clare said, and April said she had tried that once but "I didn't give a flat fuck about it." She liked working in the bar because you could shoot the shit with the customers, and if you got a little horny you could always find someone. Clare had set out a small wheel of Camembert and cut a wedge for the daughter, who had just returned to the table. The child sniffed the cheese, announced loudly that it smelled like poop, and ran off again with Sammy. When April left she thanked Clare and Zilpha profusely, took one more swig from the bottle of wine, and said, "You fucking ladies got it all." When she was gone their laughter was mixed with a little melancholy. The pheasant was delicious and Sammy got a chunk of raw shinbone of beef that had been packed for her in a cellophane sack.

That had been their next to last outing before Zilpha's diagnosis came, right after Thanksgiving. In early December they went off to a spa near Tecate in northern Baja, just a few hours south of San Diego. The trip had its moments, but the diagnosis was too fresh in their minds to try to ignore. After the first day of group exercise they gave up the program in favor of hiking in the mountains, most of the time well off the marked trails.

They had been at the spa together a decade earlier, and since then it had vastly upgraded its facilities, and the clientele had become a bit more hard and glitzy. One evening in the dining hall Zilpha said, "We're all the same here," and it was true. Other than a dozen men, there were nearly *ninety* women between the ages of forty and sixty, but most of them were around fifty. More than age, the women seemed to be fighting a malaise of fatigue and dissociation, of free-floating anxiety so deeply ingrained that it was invisible to the bearer. The regimen of a vegetarian diet and relentless exercise in a lovely setting far from home—the source of the gray-area angst—worked quite well, and within two days spirits were lifted. It was a break, not a cure, a shifting into a pleasant neutral where the body's exhaustion supplanted the brain's dreary machinations. Unfortunately, given Zilpha's death sentence, the function of *the place was too clearly scribed, so* they took refuge in the mountains, packing water bottles, hard-boiled eggs, and oranges, descending in the late afternoon to start a fire in the fireplace and drink a glass of wine before dinner. Clare had been thrilled to discover that their small villa had once been used on a regular basis by Aldous Huxley, one of her earliest reading enthusiasms. Zilpha was a steady reader herself but disliked Huxley's brittle intelligence, which reminded her of her husband. At dinner another evening Zilpha looked out over the assembled ladies and whispered, "Don't you wish April was here to sweeten them up?"

One afternoon they were sitting on a boulder halfway up Mt. Cuchama when a Pacific front swept in over a distant ridge; within a few minutes they were looking down at the roiling tops of clouds, feeling far less secure than one would in an airplane. They were excited and girlish, noting the occasional hawk or raven that would pop up through the clouds, circle around, then dive back down into the moving fleece. "These clouds aren't comforting enough for the afterlife," Zilpha said, just before they heard a rattle of stone and saw a ragged, desperate Mexican man in front of them. He gestured at his mouth in hunger and they handed down a remaining orange and hard-boiled egg from their perch on the boulder. The man pocketed the food, smiled, bowed, and scampered up the steep mountain at an alarming rate, with a physical verve that Clare pointed out none of the fitness instructors could have managed. Zilpha became depressed because the man was headed for America and might be disappointed; *then she began coughing, so they headed* down the mountain.

CLARE sat before her fire and decided that at last she was ready for sleep. She felt a trace of something new and feared she might be like a patient emerging from an asylum, using a cornstalk as a sceptre, and saying, "As of today I'm giving up control of the entire world and all of its inhabitants." A half-dozen fireflies had gathered in the darkness around her green cave, and the tiny beams seemed to trace the convolutions of her thought. Life outside the asylum was not necessarily more pleasant. It could be, but it didn't have to be. She tried to recall what her beloved Camus had said about "terrible freedom," that once you decided not to commit suicide, whether physically or figuratively, you assumed the responsibility of freedom. The thought blurred with a firefly's movement past her nose. She curled up fetally, rejected the position, and stretched out strenuously on her back until there were bone crackles.

When she had waked up a few days before this trip she had noted that her feet were getting old, and laughed. She met Dr. Roth downtown for lunch because it was his volunteer day. He looked grim in the foyer of the Caucus Club and she feared he had had a bad morning at the hospital, but it turned out that an auto dealer had called to tell him his wife was intent on buying the same car she had bought the day before. The restaurant seemed suddenly inappropriate, so they walked down the street and bought two Coney Islands apiece. Clare admitted she had never eaten one in her life but found the frankfurters covered with onions, mustard, and chili quite delicious.

"You just saved a hundred bucks," he had said, examining a splotch of mustard on his necktie. Clare had always insisted on the check.

"Too bad they don't sell these out our way."

They had ducked into a bar, had a quick beer, and removed the mustard from his tie. When they left and began walking again they decided not to be witty.

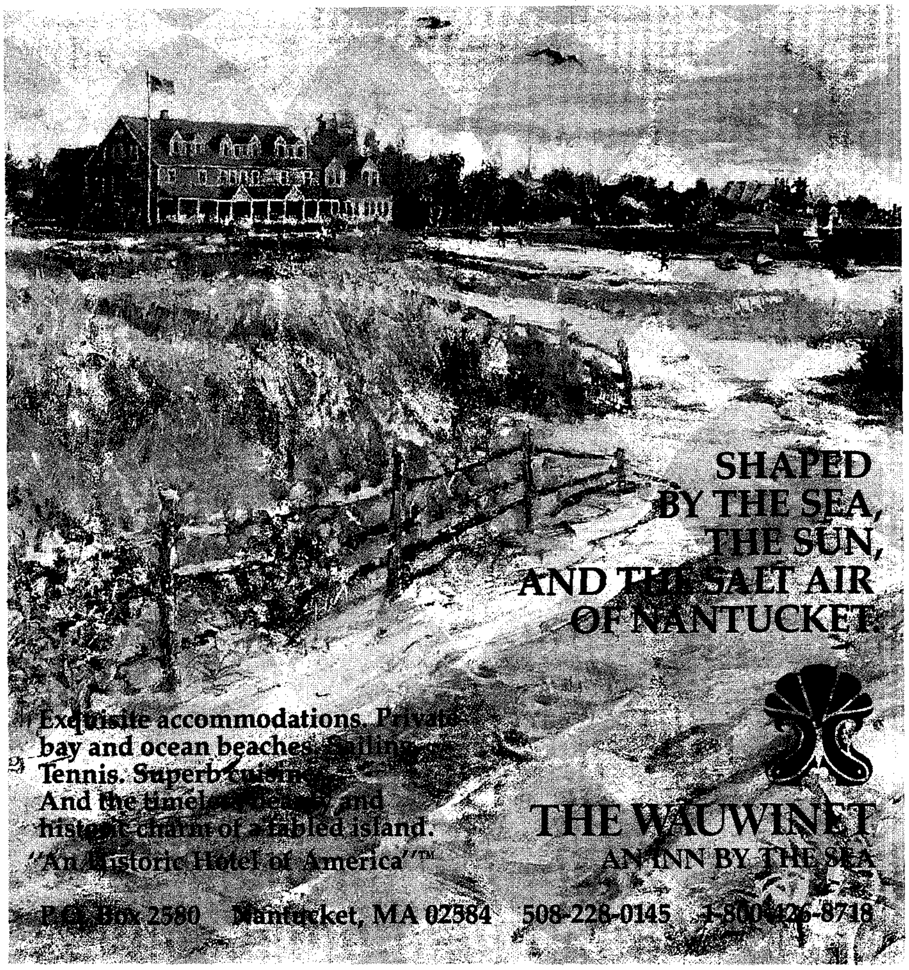
"What would you think if I left Donald?"

"I'd think you were sane"—his reply was quick—"but that's as much as I'll say. When did this come up?"

"About seven years ago. Why won't you say any more?"

"Because I've seen dozens of divorces in my practice, and the act is so utterly intimate that outside advice only confuses the issue. Also, anything I'd say would be an abridgment of your freedom."

"I understand that. I've actually re-



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duced it to an abstract principle." She had hesitated, feeling foolish.

"Let's have it. Don't leave me hanging. This will be a first."

"I want to evoke life and he wants to dominate it. Is that too simple?"

"No, I don't think so. I'll have to spend an evening with that one. When are you going to do it?"

"I have no idea."

"Where are you going?"

"I don't know."

"Well, I don't believe you don't know. In the ten years we've known each other you've mentioned a number of places you'd like to live. Let's see, there was Flagstaff, Minneapolis, Durango in Colorado, Pendleton in Oregon, and Duluth. And the obvious Paris."

"You have a remarkable memory for my nonsense."

"I've never been to any of them, but when you'd mention a place I'd look it up in the atlas and think it over." He had been nervous with this admission and looked at his watch. It was then that she understood that at one time, at least, he had cared for her. They walked on in silence for a few minutes, her heart swelling in her throat. When they reached her car, he hugged her and rushed off.

SINKING into the ground, Clare was in a state well past sleep, or so she thought, with her body sweet, warm, deadened, giving itself up to the bed of leaves and grass, the green odor transmitting a sense that she belonged to the earth as much as any other living thing. *I don't need to change. I'm just this.* Her brain had grown larger, its outer reaches vertiginous, grand, so that she could move within it as if taking an evening walk. She understood that she had been abandoned there by her mother and father, Donald, her children, Sammy, and Zilpha, and that being abandoned only by Sammy and by her children was natural. Zilpha was torn off the earth, taken away. Donald had disfigured himself beyond recognition and bore no resemblance to the man she in innocence had once been proud to love. Her mother had smelled of allspice and Martinis. Her ears smelled of gin. *Be careful because they'll always try to put their thing in you, dear. No matter what they say, that's what they're trying to do.* When Clare was older, her father had said, *Clare, look at your mother and don't drink anything stronger than wine,* and she hadn't, except an occasional brandy. One night, while she slept in her birthday tent out by the grape trellis with the English setter, Tess, the dog had growled when her mother came out to cover Clare with a mink coat; then she heard her mother vomit in the yard. Her legs were so thin, and she died a year after him—unable to stand on those legs, still smelling of gin after death, beside him in the cemetery Clare could not bear to visit. Now she would, to say goodbye.

As a child, puzzled by age, she'd say: Why is Dad older than me? Why does he say, *Take the best bite first*? We went for a drive that took all day: from the cottage to a man's farm near Gaylord to get Tess bred. We dropped her off and he didn't want me to see it, so we went to town for lunch. Mother was in the hospital so I got to eat French-fried potatoes, then we went to see the Hartwick pines, the biggest trees left, then we went to the wilderness where there were only huge old stumps. He said that all but a few white pines five feet thick were cut down. *They're like the buffalo,* but I didn't understand. At Christmas he gave me a silver dog-whistle with three small diamonds set in it, because I could make the setters mind. Sit, stay, come, heel, slow. I never got to go hunting. "Girls don't hunt," my brother said. He hit the dogs with a stick and got spanked. He would always hit me, but Mother said I did the bruises myself to make my brother look naughty. The clock said three, and I didn't hear Sammy's breath and I knew she was gone. It was May and the lilacs had just come out. I wore my nightgown and put on my hiking boots. I carried her down the hall and Donald looked out of his bedroom door and I said, *Go back to bed, Donald, this is my dog.* Out at the end of the garden I began digging and it was more than an hour before the hole was deep enough. I got down in the hole chest-deep and could see that dumb bastard Donald staring at me out the kitchen window; then he went away. I lifted Sammy in after I kissed her goodbye, and covered her with the dirt, and sat down, out of breath. At Zilpha's grave they covered the dirt with a rug of fake grass the color of grass in Easter baskets.

SOMETHING brushed against her leg and she bolted upright from the waist in alarm, with hundreds of yellow dots whirling about her and above the rabbit that paused beside the dim coals of the fire. The moon made shadows of the rabbit's twitching ears. She scrambled out of the green cave and stood, gulping air in fright, the rabbit shooting back into the thicket. She prayed that her heart would stop thumping, and looked up at the moon, and there were fireflies above her. As her heartbeat slowed she still did not want to look down at her body or touch herself because she thought she might be seven again. The fireflies were denser in some places above the thicket, blinking off and on, whirling toward each other so that if you blurred your eyes there were tracers, yellow lines of light everywhere. She thought, *Laurel should see this*, *Laurel would love this*, and then she was no longer seven.

Clare rebuilt the small fire to break the unearthly mood but the fireflies weren't disturbed. She walked up the path fifty feet, turned and looked back, hoping that she wouldn't see herself standing there. The countless thousands of fireflies stayed just outside and within and above the thicket. Quite suddenly she felt blessed, without thinking of whether or not she deserved it. She went back to her nest, lay down and wept for a few minutes, then watched a firefly hovering barely a foot above her head. She tried out *Now I lay me down to sleep* despite its failure to reassure. *All souls will be taken, including the souls of fireflies.*

She closed her eyes and felt herself floating in memory from her beginning, as if on a river but more quickly along the surface than what had happened to her. Now she saw herself sleeping on the ground, without covers, up at the cottage when she was seven, with Tess curled up in her arms, smelling like the skunk Tess had bothered. In March that year, 1947, there had been a serious bout of pneumonia, and the doctors had given her too much of the new wonder drug, penicillin. At first she was better, though she hated the hospital and asked her parents daily if she could go home, and they kept forgetting to bring her small ceramic dog. All her joints began to redden and swell, and her fever rose precipitously. The doctors diagnosed rheumatoid arthritis, a terrible disease, and then she lapsed into a coma for five days. All that she could remember from the coma was that her grandfather had brought into her hospital room his huge Belgian draft-horse mare with the rooster perched on its back. When her grandfather left with the horse and rooster, her grandmother came in leading a black bear with a red leash. Her grandmother said nothing, but the bear had sat down beside her and talked in a soothing language, and before the bear said goodbye she put Clare's ceramic dog on the nightstand, so it was there when she woke up with a big needle putting juice in her arm. No one was there when she woke up, though she thought she still smelled the bear in the room. A specialist from the university said that she was allergic to penicillin and the drug had poisoned her system. Her parents were happy she didn't have rheumatoid arthritis (they kept saying it), but Clare felt things were never quite the same again. In her child's mind she felt that they had abandoned her because she had frightened them with her illness, an almost imperceptible withholding of affection that became directed at her little brother, or so she believed. When she got out of the hospital it was nearly time to move up to the summer place, but when they got there she was told she was too ill to go fishing with her father. He kept saying, *Maybe next month*. One evening her parents went to a party down the lake; the babysitter was awful, just sitting out on the porch with a boyfriend, and Clare's little brother had purposely broken the tail off her ceramic dog by hitting it against the fireplace. She stayed up late to show the broken dog to her parents, but they came home a little drunk and spanked her for staying up late. She crawled out the window with Tess and slept under the bushes near the garage where the three-legged cat had visited them. Tess liked cats and tried to lick their fur. Early in the morning Clare was discovered, when Tess started barking at a motorboat, and she was spanked for sleeping outside. She never did get to go fishing that summer, though she happily threw her brother's favorite Teddy bear off the dock and stood there a long time until it drowned. Then her mother had to go to Mercywood, the hospital down near Ann Arbor, because she drank too much, though Clare's dad said she was

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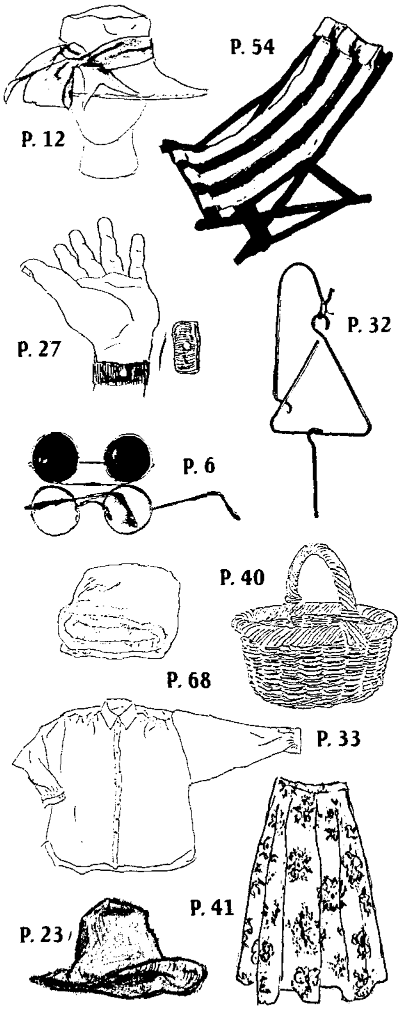

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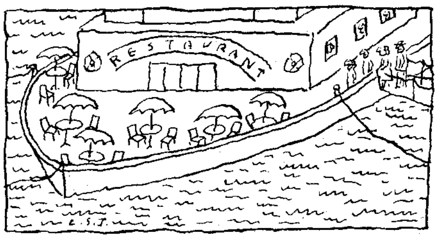
just sick. The good trip had been taking Tess to Gaylord to find her a "husband." That's what he said, though there was no church, just a farm with English setters. Then came the lunch, the big trees, and the buffalo stumps.

WHEN Clare awoke again the fireflies were gone. She rummaged in the bag until she found her watch, lit a match, and saw it was 4 A.M., with dawn less than two hours away. She felt drowsy and unafraid, so didn't bother to rekindle the fire. It was pleasant to know that she had no idea what she was going to do, other than wear a beret in Paris on at least a single walk—on a rainy August afternoon, she hoped. Unless they had small children, most women in her neighborhood in broken marriages ran afoul of sheer idleness. Clare knew she was bright enough to make herself useful somewhere, especially when she wouldn't be running the house, which she looked upon at the moment as a preposterous imposition by her mother. Her father had tended to be naturally morose, taciturn, but the times her mother began drinking again after a supposed cure were especially hard on him. Once, Clare came upon him crying in the den after her mother had fallen down the stairs. She hadn't really injured herself, but the family doctor thought it an opportunity for a quick cure. Clare's father's eyes had also become moist when Clare was dressed up for her first formal dance at fourteen. He had just arrived home from a business trip to New York and stood in the hall with his ponderous briefcase as she was leaving. He turned and nodded to the boyfriend standing on the porch, kissed her, and said, *This can't be, this is too sudden*, and off she went. The last time she saw him cry was when, despite the pressures of business, he drove her up to East Lansing to enter college. Going to Michigan State was Clare's first act of total defiance against her mother, to whom the college was unmentionable. Her mother had insisted on her own alma mater, Smith, and Clare had said, *You're not much of a recommendation, the only thing I've seen you read is "Vogue,"* and her mother had slapped her a final time. Clare's favorite teacher had gone to M.S.U., and had set up a program with old professor friends so that after basics Clare would have clear sailing in comparative literature. She envisioned a career that allowed her to read world literature and think about it, and anything beyond that would be an irritation. Her father was fairly strict about her spending, but gave her free rein with books. Sadly, Clare thought, the only time he truly defended her against her mother was in the choice of a college. But he had become quite upset when he dropped her off at her dorm and they had talked with a freedom previously unknown to them about her mother. He nearly begged her to come home as often as possible, if only for his sake. It was an unnerving moment for her, this first time her father was not quite her father but an intimate. *Oh Father don't worry I'm doing fine*, and then she slept a pure, deep, dreamless sleep.

AT first light there were more birds than she had ever heard at one time. It was as if she were *within* the birds, and wrens fluttered skillfully through the branches of the thicket. She heard whippoorwills, mourning doves, the resurgence of the red-winged blackbirds from the marsh beyond the creek. She ran a finger through the dew on her face, which was slick as fine oil, and her movement disturbed something beside her. She turned, and her heart stopped as a very long, thick, black snake eased himself off into the deeper reaches of the thicket. *Holy Jesus I have slept with a snake.* She laughed as her heart restarted. She gathered up her bag, took a sip of the boiled creek water, which had settled somewhat during the night, and scrambled out into the dawn. If someone would just bring coffee she might stay a few hours more. She began to walk down the row, then turned around, having forgotten the cranberry-juice can. When she picked it up, there was a clear view of her nest, and in the first light it reminded her of a swamp near their cabin where her father said a bear slept. She made a little goodbye bow to the green cave, examined her filthy clothes, and set off toward the east, where a burnished orange sun was rising. She thought that in the future any place she lived would have to have a clear view of the east.



TWO weeks later, in a not altogether pleasant room in a small hotel a block off the Rue Saint-Jacques, Clare's view was a scant dozen feet in any direction, but the ceiling was high. The room was as close as she could get to the pension she had stayed in for three weeks nearly thirty years before, and twenty times as expensive. She had had her walk in an August shower in her beret, without an umbrella, until she was quite wet, and then a coffee and calvados at Café de Flore, where she had overheard an American couple her age asking a waiter where Camus had sat. There are other pilgrims, she thought, without a trace of self-mockery. She read Guillevic and Sarraute in her room, reread Alain-Fournier's "The Wanderer," and planned a train trip into the countryside. In the café where she took her lunch every day, she knew she was referred to as "the schoolteacher." This pleased her, though it wasn't meant to.

On long walks in the overwarm city she had occasion to think of the cool breezes that came off Lake Michigan in the evening. If she had the whole thing to do over, she would do it differently, but then no one has anything to do over.

Down near the end of the corn row a pickup truck passed, and she hid as an old man turned off the irrigation for the soybean field, which was tinged orange and glistened in the morning sun. She followed the path of the pickup to the back of a barn where there was a field of pigs with small, low-slung sheds in rows, and a smell that would take some time to get used to. She went through a gate into a barnyard where the old man had the hood up on his pickup and was tinkering. A collie mongrel rushed at her, barking, but Clare said a quiet hello and the dog wagged its tail. The old man looked at her without alarm and put his hands in his denim jacket.

"What can I do for you?"

"I've been misplaced. I'd like a cup of coffee."

"If it's coffee you want, we got coffee. You must be the woman we heard about all evening on the radio. You're supposed to be in a red car."

"That was just a note. I spent the night in your field." Her voice began to quaver.

"You had to get loose. The radio said he was beating on you."

The old man led her toward the porch, where a very large old woman was standing with her arms crossed. "She looks just like Grandma, doesn't she, Ed?" she said. At the screen door, with its tuft of cotton to keep away flies, the old man nodded in assent. Ed disappeared into the house and came back with an antique gold-leaf hand mirror that had a photo portrait of a woman framed on the back of it. The woman wore a stiff-necked black dress and bore an amazing resemblance to Clare, who was momentarily disoriented.

"That picture was took in 1890," said the old woman.

"I suppose I should make some phone calls," Clare said.

Laurel arrived in two hours from Des Moines in a police car with a state trooper who talked farm prices and drank coffee with Ed while Laurel and Clare sat on a porch swing. Laurel had come down from Sioux Falls and spent the night in vigil with Donald in Des Moines. "I never thought you would do it," Laurel kept saying.

"How's Donald?"

"He's unhappy but he'll survive. He told the police you had a nervous breakdown, but I had them call Dr. Roth. You have to tell the trooper that he didn't abuse you within Iowa state lines."

"The poor thing," Clare said, and began to cry.

Clare spent a scant hour talking with Donald in a room at a Best Western motel in Des Moines. There was more than a trace in him of the vulnerability that she once had cherished. He wanted to put off any decision "in depth" until Clare "came to her senses," which was precisely what she thought he'd say. She sat next to her suitcase on the bed near the open window. She couldn't help noticing the day's *Wall Street Journal* and a notepad covered with numbers on the nightstand. He was the same Donald, only paler, and she waited fearfully for some tremor to come, but it didn't. There were a few surprises.

"I can't say I didn't see this coming, but I hoped we'd carry on."

"I don't have anything left to carry on." It was so utterly painful to say it.

"Is it Dr. Roth?" He looked away when he asked this, as if fearing a blow.

"No. Don't be absurd. You were always more than enough."

"What about the house? What about everything, for God's sake?"

"I hope you'll still look after everything. I don't care about the house. I want my books, but the house was Mother's idea." She found that she was three feet from her body again, but craving the immediacy of the thicket. What did fireflies do in the daytime? Perhaps Laurel would know.

"I had a good talk with Laurel last night. Per usual she told me what was wrong with me. When she was little she even told me how to shave. She said you were tired of the life you were living and wanted to do something else. Is it as simple as that?"

Clare looked up and saw that he had begun to cry, but it was Donald crying, not her father. She nodded yes, it was as simple as that. She got up and hugged him, and saw herself hugging him in the wall mirror, and a wave of claustrophobia swept through her body.

"We'll talk it over in October," she said, because that was what Laurel had told her to say.

Laurel was dozing in the car and awoke with a start when her father put Clare's suitcase in the back seat. Laurel got out and began to cry, which was so untypical that both Clare and Donald were nonplussed, though Donald might have felt some subdued pleasure. They consoled Laurel, and it occurred to a couple driving up to the entrance that they were seeing a happy, if tearful, reunion.

In Paris, at a newsstand, Clare bought a Rand McNally road atlas of America. Owing to the strength of the franc, many prosperous French were visiting the States. In her room she spent a warm, humid afternoon looking at the locations that interested her, letting the maps bring back Zilpha, and Sammy sitting expectantly in the back seat waiting for a lunch break or a rest-stop stroll. Clare felt a little lost, but then she always had, and supposed easily that it was the condition of life. Lying back on the bed, under the whirr of the fan on the nightstand, she decided that she felt less lost than before her night in the thicket, and that when the afternoon cooled she would write letters to Dr. Roth and Laurel. If it rained, she would wear her beret to dinner.

—JIM HARRISON

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THE WORLD OF BUSINESS

UNDOING THE EIGHTIES

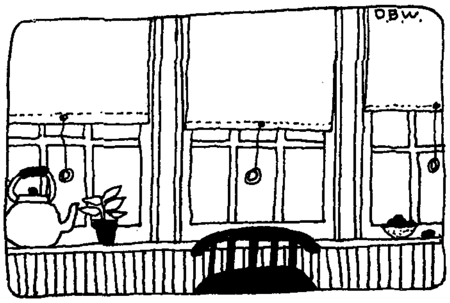
THE March, 1987, senior-management meeting of American Express, at Turnberry Isle, a lush Florida resort, was proceeding smoothly, according to plan, with well-researched, elaborately packaged presentations, of the kind that the company's chairman and chief executive officer, James Robinson III, was known to favor. Certain executives reported not only on the demographics of their businesses but on the "psychographics"—the effort to probe the psychodynamics of their customers' product preferences—and as they uttered key points those points would appear, in perfect synchrony and highlighted, in the form of vivid multicolored slides on a large screen. The speakers were earnest, and the audience was rapt.

Then Peter Cohen rose to address the group. Cohen, the chairman and chief executive officer of the leading Wall Street securities firm of Shearson Lehman, which was then a wholly owned subsidiary of American Express, ran through his requisite slide presentation at a breakneck clip (his allotted time had been shortened), peppering his remarks with jocular comments to his friends from Shearson in the front rows, in a performance that, at least to some in the audience, made a mockery of the process. One participant recalls that the usually enigmatic, unflappable Robinson "looked as if he was about to have a heart attack." Later, the talk among the non-Shearson contingent of American Express smoldered with resentment: Cohen had behaved in a way that they viewed as arrogant, cocky, and flip, his humor belittling to them personally and an insult to their organization; and it had been, moreover, vintage Cohen.

Cohen was not unique in his irreverence. Shearson, which American Express had acquired in 1981, was a hard-bitten retail-brokerage business that through the seventies had scavenged Wall Street for weakened firms, swallowing up one after another. In this propulsive agglomeration, there had been no time for amenities; Shearson's employees, and particularly its leaders, prided themselves on being self-made, tough, streetwise entrepreneurs. And to many Shearsonites the imperial corporation of American Express invited wild parody at every turn—for its concern with titles and lines of authority, its intensely political atmosphere, its formidable public-relations apparatus, its endless deluge of memos, and its readiness to convene numerous meetings for almost any reason, no matter how trivial, such as designating those individuals on each floor of the new American Express Tower who would bear responsibility for monitoring the contents of the bulletin boards.

"We always thought of the American Express people as overly planned, overly staged, overly bureaucratic," a Shearson executive told me. "We saw ourselves, on the other hand, as the tough guys, very smart, who were marching to our own drummer, who made decisions by the seat of our pants." This sense of institutional superiority, moreover, was ratified by the Shearson paychecks—competitive with the dazzling salaries and bonuses paid throughout Wall Street in the eighties—which made American Express's corporate pay scale seem parsimonious.

However much the Shearson view of American Express reflected a clash of cultures, and an arrogance at Shearson that was more collective than individual, it came to be personified by Cohen—who expressed it most freely, and even recklessly. "Peter treated the American Express people like mushrooms, like a lower form of life," a former Shearson executive has commented. And Cohen's high-handedness apparently extended to American Express's board of directors, whose roster included C.E.O.s of the *Fortune* 500—austere pillars of the business and social establishment, to whom the rough-hewn Cohen must have seemed doubly damnable: not only a parvenu but one who was resolutely ill-mannered. His abrupt, rapid-fire answers to questions were often intimidating to directors, seeming to imply that their questions were foolish. Several directors complained repeatedly to Robinson, who spoke to Cohen about the need to behave better, and to treat them with greater respect.



These remonstrances were mild, however. For, no matter how much directors and executives of American Express might grouse about Cohen, he was essentially unassailable, so armored was he by success. Shearson's record earnings in 1986—three hundred and forty-one million dollars—had been a boon to American Express, which was just recovering from heavy losses in its Fireman's Fund, a division that in earlier years had produced stellar earnings for the company. Now, thanks to Shearson, American Express was sharing in the torrent of profits that flooded Wall Street in the mid-eighties.

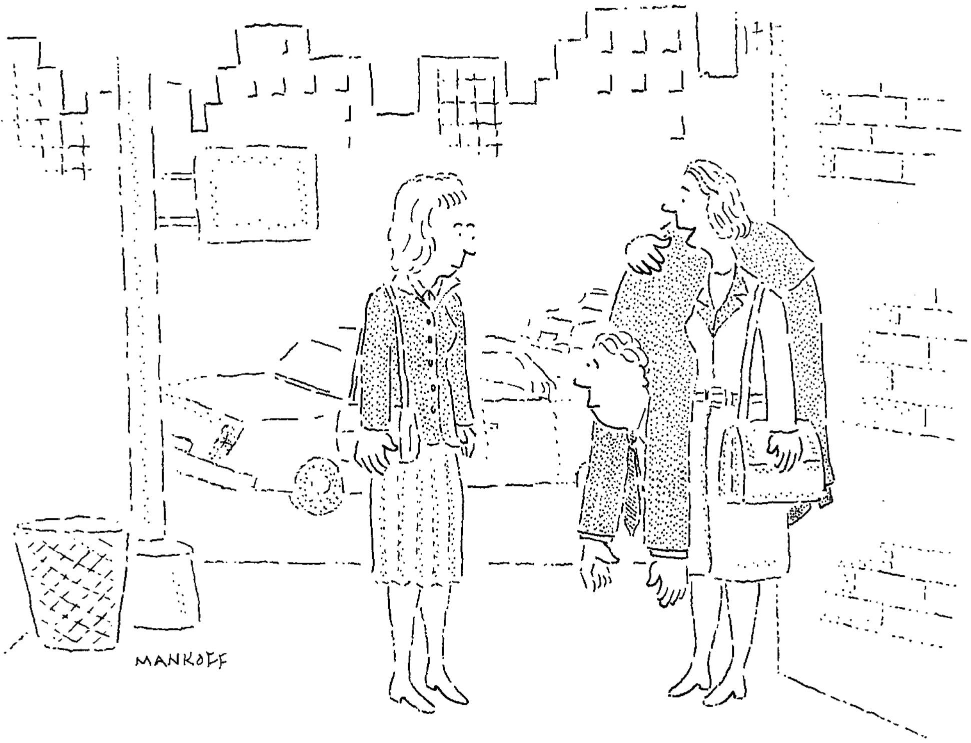
And Cohen, who was thirty-six when, in 1983, he became the C.E.O. of Shearson (the youngest head of a major Wall Street firm), had regularly been lionized in the business press as a wunderkind. He was brash and impolitic and swaggering, yes, but that (the subtext typically read) was what wunderkinder were *supposed* to be, especially in the heady eighties. In 1987, the magazine *Euromoney* named Cohen Banker of the Year. And early in 1988, after Shearson acquired E. F. Hutton—in a bid to overtake Merrill Lynch as the biggest retail broker (to become, some said, "the Jewish Merrill Lynch")—*Institutional Investor* published a cover story about Cohen, entitled "Today Hutton, tomorrow . . ." In that admiring article the writer, Cary Reich, asserted that Cohen was trying to establish himself "in the mold of . . . such Wall Street legends as André Meyer, Sidney Weinberg, and Robert Lehman."

Robinson himself was a Cohen admirer, convinced that he was an extraordinary talent and a unique asset for American Express. That Cohen was also, on occasion, abrasive or rude was something that Robinson—notwithstanding his own lustrous lineage, as the scion of an Atlanta banking family—was willing to overlook. "I'm not saying Jim liked him *personally*," one Robinson associate said to me. "But he stood his ground on Peter. Linda"—Robinson's wife—"did not like Peter. Other people criticized Peter. But Jim really was his booster. I think he was mesmerized by him."

Through most of the eighties, Robinson and Cohen were united in the conviction that the global marketplace had arrived, and that within the next decade it would be dominated by a handful of those giant firms which could offer the gamut of financial services to a wide range of customers. Fuelled by that conviction, American Express in the early eighties had acquired not only Shearson but also the Trade Development Bank (T.D.B.), a Swiss-based bank, with a very rich clientele, that had been built by the legendary Lebanese-born financier Edmond Safra, and—at the other end of the client scale—Investors Diversified Services (I.D.S.), a mass-market financial-planning and investment company. Thus, under Robinson's aegis American Express metamorphosed from a merchandiser of charge cards and traveller's checks into a full-scale financial supermarket: *Business Week* pronounced it, in 1986, "the state-of-the-art financial-services conglomerate."

Shearson was the juggernaut of Robinson's drive. Shearson had begun an international expansion in the early eighties, and in 1984 acquired the old-line, elegant Lehman Brothers Kuhn Loeb and, four years later, E. F. Hutton, all as part of an attempt to transform itself into a securities-industry titan—the biggest in retail brokerage and one of the foremost in investment-banking and capital markets, here and abroad.

Cohen, of course, was not trying to build Shearson into the biggest, most powerful Wall Street firm for the greater glory of the American Express empire. He was building Shearson qua Shearson—and was glad to have the resources of American Express behind him. Robinson had for some time been messianic on the potential for synergy among the American Express companies, instituting incentives for cross-selling, and exhorting all the employees of all the various subsidiaries to think of themselves as "one enterprise," but Cohen had by and large resisted these entreaties, and Shearson had remained stubbornly isolationist.



"This is Stan, my latest project."

• •

His desire was not for symbiosis but for ever-greater autonomy; partly for this reason, Shearson had sold its stock to the public in the spring of 1987, and had brought in Nippon Life, the Japanese insurance behemoth, as an equity investor. (American Express's stake in Shearson fell to sixty-two per cent.)

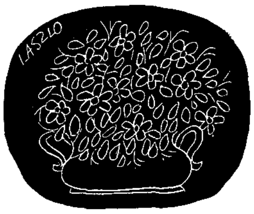
While Robinson's and Cohen's expansionist goals were not identical, they dovetailed nicely for a time—particularly during the halcyon markets of the mid-eighties. But when the financial tide began to recede decisively, in late 1988, and Shearson's earnings flattened, Robinson and Cohen—and American Express and Shearson—became a less happy conjugation.

By the spring of 1989, Cohen—stripped of his armor of success, feeling vulnerable to the ill will he had engendered in happier times—was becoming increasingly convinced that Robinson was numbering his days. He felt this despite the fact that it was difficult for Cohen—or most people, for that matter—to really read Robinson; one friend of twenty-five years says that he never knows what Robinson is thinking, and others have noted that he always keeps his own counsel, revealing himself to no one but his wife. Even people who have worked closely with him for many years describe him as someone who maintains a pleasant, affable demeanor, suffused with a social grace that has smoothed his way in the world, but who gives no hint of what lies beneath this rather studied projection. Cohen, in any event, knew better than to draw comfort from Robinson's even temper. "Jim is quite capable of being pleasant with someone in the morning and firing him in the afternoon," a Robinson friend has said. "And he doesn't see anything wrong with that." On January 29, 1990, Robinson fired Cohen.

Robinson, an able executive, is well organized, disciplined, and possessed of a prodigious appetite for work, but these traits are complemented, and perhaps overshadowed, by others more political: he is a cool corporate operative, master of the boardroom, cultivator of a perfectly packaged public image, who in his thirteen-year tenure at American Express has until recently—despite a number of missteps and scandals—enjoyed a reputation as sterling, and even statesmanlike, as that of any C.E.O. in this country.

Now, having dispatched Cohen, he sought to work his magic. Cohen had become a liability for Robinson, but with his expenditure Cohen was transmuted, once again, into an asset. Over the next several months, Robinson and Howard Clark, Jr., who was Cohen's successor, and American Express spokespeople strove to lay the excesses and failed judgments that had bedevilled Shearson—and that represented a kind of microcosm of the eighties—at Cohen's door.

Cohen was, in fact, the ideal scapegoat; he *had* committed errors, and his earlier hubris now made sympathy scarce. Like many others, he had seemed to mistake the mountains of money made by his firm in the mid-eighties for a sign of his personal prowess, rather than recognizing that they were, more, a gift of beneficent markets, distributed widely and almost indiscriminately—and that, as the financier Michel David-Weill, of Lazard Frères, has expressed it, "We are only as good as the times we are in." Now those bounteous times had ended (in such neat lockstep with the final days of the eighties as to seem a conceit), and Cohen—like many other icons of the age that shaped them—had fallen.



The revisionism that endeavored to portray Cohen as a lone arch-villain is, however, more convenient than accurate; and the calamity at Shearson Lehman Hutton, which during the current recession on Wall Street has cost thousands their jobs and resulted in a first-quarter loss this year of nearly a billion dollars, is no simple morality play but a more complicated dramaturgy, determined by a volatile chemistry of climate and character. "In this story, there was no white hat and no black hat," one close observer told me. There was, however, a crucial dynamic. "Jim and Peter," this observer added, "were two characters who played off each other in an interesting way."

IN 1981, when Shearson was acquired by American Express, for almost a billion dollars, it was the most profitable national retail-brokerage firm in the country. It was also a paradigm of cost-consciousness. Under the leadership of Sanford Weill, who was one of the founders of the original firm, Carter, Berlind, Potoma & Weill, in 1960—it became Shearson in 1974, after the acquisition of Shearson Hammill & Company—the brokerage had grown through the seventies by repeating essentially the same act time after time: it acquired a desperately troubled firm at a bargain-basement price, disbanded the firm's back office, and stripped away other redundant employees. "The genius of Shearson was that one and one always equalled one and a half, never two," one longtime employee told me.

For this economic sleight of hand Weill relied on Cohen as his chief executor—his number-cruncher, detail man, back-office expert, and negotiator. After Robinson's acquisition of Shearson, Weill, who harbored sovereign ambitions at American Express, became the chairman of its executive committee and, in 1983, its president; Cohen, meanwhile, ran Shearson. And in those first few years Cohen appears to have adhered to the penny-pinching, risk-averse precepts of his mentor. The early eighties were a period of struggle for many Wall Street firms, but in 1983 Shearson saw a spectacular forty-per-cent rise in profits over the year before and a revenue boost of thirty-seven per cent.

The next five years saw a change. Shearson—that single-purpose institution, tightfisted, parochial, homely, controlled—would succumb to the temptations that ran amok through Wall Street in the mid-eighties. A new Shearson, a creature of the times, emerged, as from a chrysalis: diffuse, high-flying, extravagant, glamorous—the antithesis of all it had been before. However dramatic was the contrast between the old Shearson and the new, though, the signal metamorphosis was the one taking place in the person of Cohen: the firm's was merely a reflection of his.

Cohen, whose father was a successful manufacturer of children's clothing, grew up in the middle-class suburb of Rockville Centre, on Long Island's South Shore. He graduated from Ohio State University and received an M.B.A. from Columbia. The Cohen of those years has been described by friends as shy, insecure, and work-obsessed, but with a keen sense of humor among people with whom he felt at ease. In 1973, he became Weill's protégé at Shearson and proceeded to cultivate the public persona by which he was known thereafter: a tough, cigar-smoking buccaneer, whose profile fit the firm's.

Then, in 1984, with the acquisition of Lehman Brothers, Shearson's nature changed dramatically. Now, with Lehman's investment-banking franchise and inestimable cachet, Shearson was making its bid to break into the élite Wall Street club—the "bulge bracket," or first-tier securities firms. But however much strategic sense the merger made—and however vital it was to Cohen's and Robinson's shared vision of the Shearson of the nineties—the cultural chasm between Shearson and Lehman was immense.

Lehman had been founded in 1850, by what would become one of the pre-eminent German-Jewish investment-banking families on Wall Street. In this century, it was headed for more than four prosperous decades by Robert (Bobbie) Lehman; but after his death, in 1969, the infighting that broke out between its traders and its investment bankers eventually destroyed the firm. Even so, the Lehman contingent was not humbled by Shearson's acquisition of the firm, and many of its members disdained their acquirer as a "tacky wire house."

Cohen, some of his friends say, was awed by the Lehman partners and stung by their hauteur. Robinson, moreover, was concerned that the newly merged firm establish an ambience in which the old Lehman partners would feel at home; so Cohen, with Robinson's blessing, set out to show them that the new Shearson Lehman could, indeed, live up to their style. Lehman's dining room had offered the most expensive wines, the finest Havana cigars, a kitchen ruled by a former chef of Le Pavillon; Botticellis, Rembrandts, Renoirs, Matisses, Picassos, and Cézannes—all lent from Bobbie Lehman's private collection—had graced the firm's walls. Now, in the new American Express Tower at the World Financial Center, in New York, where Shearson (surrendering its thrifty space at the World Trade Center) moved, with the rest of the company, in 1986, the Shearson Lehman executive dining room rivalled its Lehman forerunner in elegance, and the halls were hung with nineteenth-century American art, bought by the firm itself, for what is said to have been about twenty million dollars. Some of the veteran Shearsonites rolled their eyes at the opulence, but it was generally viewed as compatible with the style of living set by their parent, American Express, and besides, as one old Shearson hand put it, "it was a much nicer way to live than counting paper clips."

For a time, Cohen seemed to be managing Shearson Lehman with the compulsive vigilance he had developed over the past twenty years. In this he was something of an anomaly, inasmuch as poor management is almost a Wall Street tradition (and certainly one that Lehman had honored). Managing was Cohen's forte. One American Express adviser, who has watched and dealt with Cohen over the years from the vantage point of a rival firm, and has considered him "one of the shrewdest managers of a securities firm that I have ever known," told me that even after the Lehman acquisition he had known Cohen as someone who obsessively scrutinized the business—whose idea of light reading on his travels was his investment bankers' expense accounts.

Gradually, though, Cohen turned away from management of the firm, and from the lessons he had learned in running a retail business (where thin profit margins mandate scrupulous monitoring of expenses and overhead), and gave himself over to the far more chimerical high-profile and high-margin world of investment banking. It was for him a kind of emergence. For most of his career on Wall Street, Cohen had focussed intently on what was familiar—on a small, limited sphere. He had been methodical, fastidious, pragmatic, numbers-driven—and, even friends thought, short on the imagination and vision that might create a great institution.

Now, apparently, he felt a burgeoning confidence and curiosity, a readiness to discard his blinders and discover the world. He decided he would become multilingual, and studied French and Italian. He spent a great deal of time cultivating contacts abroad. He developed a relationship with the Italian entrepreneur Carlo De Benedetti, in some of whose businesses Shearson invested. De Benedetti became a Shearson director, and he placed Cohen on the board of the élite Brussels-based holding company Société Générale de Belgique.

This transition was heartily applauded by Robinson, who told *Institutional Investor* in early 1988 that he had "encouraged Peter to establish his contacts around the world in banking, in government and in business. I thought he should do it because it would increase his sphere of influence in terms of both having a broader perspective than just Wall Street alone, and being able to make the contribution he can in terms of client development." Robinson may indeed have been something of an inspiration to Cohen during his effort to reconfigure himself. It is true that Robinson's background, unlike Cohen's, had provided the perfect platform for success. Robinson's father, grandfather, and great-grandfather had all been Atlanta bankers, and his father, known as Big Jim, had been one of the most prominent regional bankers in the country. The young Robinson graduated from the Georgia Institute of Technology and Harvard Business School, then took a job at Morgan Guaranty Trust Company, the blue-blood bastion, and, subsequently, at the pronouncedly white-shoe investment-banking firm of White, Weld & Company, before being invited to American Express by its chairman and C.E.O., Howard Clark, Sr.

But Robinson was no stranger to the art of self-improvement. The son of a powerfully built man (Big Jim had stood at six feet four inches and weighed about two hundred and twenty pounds), Robinson at college age was still relatively short (five feet eight) and extremely slight (a hundred and twenty-five pounds). He told *Business Week* in a 1988 article that he had grown "tired of having sand kicked in my face" and so, during college, became a body builder. He still rises at 5:30 A.M. to lift weights, and prides himself on his muscularity. (He once remarked to a friend that he hoped that in the movie version of "Barbarians at the Gate"—a book about the battle for RJR Nabisco, in which he played a prominent part—his role would be played by Arnold Schwarzenegger.)

Nor has Robinson limited himself to physical transformation. Back in the late seventies, when Clark was deciding whom he would recommend to succeed him at American Express, he was disinclined to choose Robinson, an associate says, because he did not think Robinson had sufficient presence to work well with the board. Robinson then sought the help of the political consultant Roger Ailes, and has continued to be coached by others over the past decade. (His current coach, Sonya

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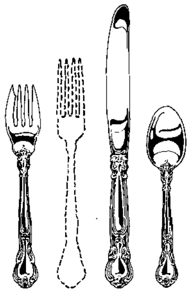

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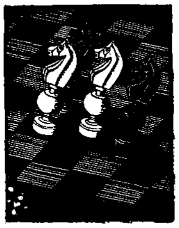
Hamlin, watched him from the first row at the most recent American Express shareholders' meeting.) Now his ability to package and present is considered one of his great strengths. "Jim takes these things very seriously," a friend of his told me. "He believes that if you're a leader you should speak well. If you're alive, you should be in good shape, feel good, look good. He's the original true believer."

To some degree, Robinson's image-consciousness can be attributed to his position as the head of a "service" organization; it is vital, after all, that the image of American Express convey a sense of dependability, responsibility, and, in Robinson's tirelessly repeated phrase, "commitment to quality." But some who have known him for many years believe that Robinson's long-standing efforts to embellish his own image are also directed toward far loftier goals. Indeed, his cultivation of the role of statesman (which he urged Cohen to emulate) is widely seen as a hoped-for preamble to high political office—according to one friend, the White House itself. He branched out into diplomacy in the late eighties, and became so active in Washington on matters of trade policy, including a proposed solution to the Third World debt crisis (designed at American Express, and referred to as the Robinson Plan), that he seemed to some onlookers more statesman than C.E.O., yet his milieu did not change dramatically. In the Robinson family's circles, public service had long been common; it connoted not personal ambition so much as noblesse oblige.



For Cohen, on the other hand, to be mingling with heads of state and business, here and abroad, as a leader of a powerful American corporation and a significant player on the international scene was a transition so sudden, so wondrous, so overwhelming that he seemed to lose his bearings. He became infatuated with his role as Shearson's ambassador; in foreign cities, he dined not with Shearson brokers based there but with dignitaries. He became a peripatetic world traveller; one Shearson banker told me that if he asked Cohen to see a domestic client Cohen was always too busy, but if there was a client in Milan he was "on the plane in five minutes."

And, in socializing with the likes of De Benedetti and the Italian industrialist Giovanni Agnelli, Cohen—whom friends considered excessively frugal, and who had steadfastly gone on driving a Buick station wagon long after he became a multimillionaire—developed a taste for luxury, financed by Shearson. By 1989, Shearson owned three Gulfstream jets. The interior of one of the planes, decorated by Naomi Leff (also an interior designer for Ralph Lauren), was lined with Ultrasuede, its brushing a duty of the flight attendants. In the late eighties, Shearson built a conference center in the ski resort of Beaver Creek, Colorado. It became a project of Cohen's wife, Karen, who, when she saw that neighboring ski chalets were visible from the windows, directed that full-grown evergreen trees be planted to block the offending view. Initially planned to cost eight million dollars, the center's construction ultimately came to twenty-five million.

Meanwhile, the firm's vistas were widening as rapidly as Cohen's. Since Cohen and Robinson agreed that they should seek to win a place in what they (and much of Wall Street) believed would be a global oligopoly, Shearson had started its international expansion early—too early, it turned out. Before acquiring Lehman (and the cachet that eventually multiplied its options for acquisitions abroad), Shearson had made a commitment to acquire L. Messel, a middling securities firm in London. After Messel was acquired, its life style improved dramatically: in 1986, Shearson moved into palatial, exquisitely decorated new quarters in the Broadgate complex, in London—quarters a third as large as its space in the World Financial Center (some of this space was to be taken by American Express Bank, which then backed out of the deal, leaving Shearson with the surplus). Less than a year later, Shearson—struggling with overcapacity in the business, and trying to stanch substantial losses—fired approximately a hundred and fifty of its London employees.

Shearson's experience in London (shared, to some degree, by other Wall Street firms) did nothing to temper its enthusiasm; both Robinson and Cohen continued to believe not only that a global presence was necessary but that it had to be sizable. By the end of 1989, Shearson had opened full-service branches in Tokyo, Paris, Milan, Frankfurt, Geneva, Madrid, Sydney, Taipei, and Hong Kong, and was maintaining more than a dozen smaller offices in other far-flung cities.

Shearson's expansion was equally ambitious on the domestic front. The stage for its 1988 acquisition of Hutton had been set in 1983, when the decision was made to build a mammoth data-processing facility, the Faulkner Center—a decision that *Institutional Investor* lauded in 1988 as one of "unusual foresight and daring, requiring as it did an investment of $200 million for a facility with a clear overcapacity for its day."

By contrast, Shearson's decision to acquire Hutton, made in late 1987, seemed to require neither extraordinary vision nor courage but only good sense. It was a perfect strategic move, inasmuch as it would enable Shearson to go from third place as a retail power to a spot where it could vie with Merrill Lynch for No. 1. Of all the expansions Shearson was undertaking, this was the most justifiable, since it involved the firm's core, historic business. There were no dissenters, or even doubters, on the American Express board, and Robinson was strong in his support.

In its incarnation as the new, broad-gauge Shearson, the firm moved into another Wall Street eighties vogue, merchant banking—taking substantial equity positions in deals, frequently leveraged buyouts (LBOs), in which the public shares of a company are bought in an acquisition financed largely by debt and collateralized by the company's assets—and, often, making bridge loans. (These loans, in theory, span the interval between the deal's closing and the placement of its junk debt with buyers.) Thus, Shearson, like many other securities firms, moved from a traditional role as an intermediary to the far more dramatic one of principal. Shearson and its Boston Company private-banking and asset-management subsidiary both invested hundreds of millions of dollars in junk bonds. Shearson also acquired twenty-eight per cent of a high-flying Los Angeles life-insurance company, First Capital, which maintained an enormous junk-bond portfolio. And Shearson's primary real-estate subsidiary, Balcor (whose tax-shelter partnerships had become obsolete after the

1986 changes in the tax laws), was now moving aggressively into construction lending—a somewhat anomalous business for a Wall Street securities firm, even in the freewheeling, improvisational eighties.

"Peter was always saying, 'Here is the opportunity—let's take it,' " a Shearson executive told me. "Shearson did not miss one opportunity—some opportunities were related to our core businesses, and some not. Peter had the vision. But in a firm like ours there should have been eight people who would sometimes say no. Instead, there was only Peter, with the vision."

That Cohen (whom friends had once thought too pedestrian to let his imagination take flight) went unchecked at Shearson was no accident, for, at the top of the firm, he continued to surround himself with cohorts from the past—men with whom he had grown up in the business. This group, viewed as a clique by those from Lehman who tried, and failed, to win entry, had been an able team over the years, but not one of its members had ever had any experience with an institution remotely like the one they were now overseeing—and not one was formidable enough to meaningfully challenge Cohen. A Shearson employee once recalled that in discussions with these and other senior executives "the question that most of them would ask was not 'What is in the best interests of the firm?' but 'What does Peter want?' "

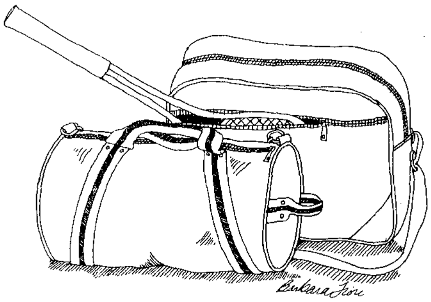
What Cohen wanted most, of course, was to pursue his vision of the apotheosis of Shearson Lehman Hutton, and to do so with a minimum of interference. Within Shearson he had hegemony, but American Express—at least in theory—was his boss. He was required, for example, to participate in its strategic-planning sessions, which were conducted by McKinsey & Company, the consulting organization. McKinsey had been a fixture at American Express for decades; it was a frequent adviser to Clark during his tenure, and has been an even more frequent one during Robinson's. But Cohen and McKinsey were oil and water. A McKinsey study of Shearson was viewed as unthinkable—by both sides.

One participant in those planning sessions recalls Cohen as "blasé, bored, just not interested," and explains, "His attitude was that you could not plan for a securities firm as you would for other industries." Somebody else told me he believed that Cohen's intransigence had little to do with the peculiarities of his industry. "Peter's saying that you couldn't do long-term strategic planning for Shearson was a cop-out. *He* was doing it. He just didn't want to sit around doing it with people from American Express. Peter would say, 'You guys, don't give me that crap. This is a *real* industry, this is a *tough* industry, this isn't selling traveller's checks.' But he was intuitively making huge bets based on strategic assumptions."

COHEN'S cardinal challenger at American Express in the late eighties was its president, Louis Gerstner, Jr., who replaced Weill in 1985, when Weill was, through corporate politics, forced out of the company. Gerstner, who had joined McKinsey after graduating from Harvard Business School, had begun advising Robinson at American Express in the early seventies.

By the time Robinson took over the chairmanship, in 1977, he had two major plans he wanted to put into effect. One was to acquire a new line of business, and it led to an ill-advised hostile bid for McGraw-Hill, which failed—an embarrassing début. The other, more felicitous plan was to hire Gerstner to revive the Travel Related Services Company (T.R.S.), the heart of American Express, which was facing increasing competition in the credit-card and traveller's-check businesses. Over the next decade, Gerstner transformed the credit-card business, and—while other American Express enterprises waxed and waned—T.R.S. continued to generate enormous earnings.

"While earnings at T.R.S., under Lou, were growing at fifteen per cent, year after year, Shearson's earnings were up one quarter, down another, and it was disturbing when the market valuation of American Express stock was so affected by Shearson's ups and downs," says Henry Duques, the president and C.E.O. of American Express's Information Services Corporation, a data-processing company, which was formerly part of T.R.S. "So Lou would ask Peter for numbers, and ask him some probing questions. But Peter's response was 'Don't try to pin me down. I can't *manage* it the way you do—it's a different business. The market goes up and the market goes down. And if it goes up next month I could make a hundred million.' "



According to many who have worked with Cohen, he possesses an extraordinary fluency in numbers, as though they were almost a second language, and as Shearson expanded in the mid-eighties his grasp of its numbers remained intact; he was, in the words of one American Express executive, "a walking numbers machine." But as Shearson's growth continued, and Cohen became more distracted, it was clear that his grasp was loosening. "Lou Gerstner would ask Peter for numbers, and Peter would just give them off the top of his head," a close associate of Cohen told me. "Lou would write them down, and go away and check them, and then he would come back and say they were not right."

The rising tension between Gerstner and Cohen was not particularly personal; each held the other in high regard. But Gerstner argued to Robinson that Shearson's strategy should be subjected to the kind of rigorous review experienced by other parts of American Express. Even in the mid-eighties, it was clear that there were sober questions to be asked: Why should Shearson plunge into London, committing itself to huge overhead costs, without knowing the economics of the business there? Why should it be in the construction-lending business? Why in life insurance? Even though merchant banking was all the rage, should Shearson be putting its own capital at risk? Should it be making bridge loans? Should it be making large investments in junk bonds? Was it necessary to open full-service, abundantly staffed (and, in some cases, lavishly appointed) branches in so many foreign cities?

It is true that Shearson's expansionism, seen in the context of the times, was not mindless empire building. Behind the vast majority of its initiatives lay a strategic rationale: globalization, economies of scale, the marriage of origination and placement powers in underwriting and retail activities, the perception of insurance as an increasingly important financial instrument. But, even though a discrete justification existed for each individual move, what appeared to impel the whole enterprise—its generative force —was an ethos of limitlessness: that there was, and should be, no limit to resources, no limit to businesses in which to invest, no limit to the sublime market conditions of the mid-eighties. "The view was that you had to be in every market doing everything with every product, because you didn't want to miss the pot of gold," J. Tomilson (Tom) Hill, the co-head of investment banking at Shearson, told me. Such an attitude, while hardly unique to Shearson, made Gerstner nervous. What he wanted, according to several associates, was to keep that diffuse, proliferating organism in clear, analytic focus—to examine how its diverse parts were related to one another, and what their risk profiles were.

Gerstner, however, did not have direct responsibility for Shearson in the American Express hierarchy. T.R.S. (of which he remained chairman after he became president of American Express) and I.D.S. reported to Gerstner; Shearson and American Express Bank (which had absorbed Safra's T.D.B.) reported to Robinson. Gerstner wanted to have all divisions report to him—to become, in effect, chief operating officer (a post that does not exist at American Express). According to a friend of his, he felt especially strongly about this in the late eighties, when his concerns about Shearson were intensifying, while Robinson, for his part, was spending an increasing amount of time in Washington. But Robinson refused to allow anyone to become chief operating officer—as he had done several years earlier, too, when Gerstner's predecessor, Weill, lobbied him with the same desire.

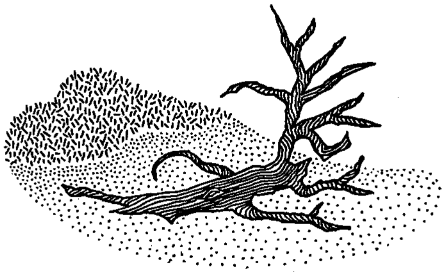
"Jim was definitely happier with Shearson than Lou was," one associate of the two men told me. "Lou is brilliant financially—the mere fact that he was sitting there made people in the company more careful. And he has a management approach that is much more hands-on than Jim's. Jim *was* hands-on, ten years ago."

Robinson apparently continued to be a believer in Shearson, and in its primacy in the global financial empire he had set out to build in the early eighties. His sanguine attitude may well have been reinforced by his press, which, while nearly always good, had by the late eighties become breathless. In January of 1988, a *Business Week* cover story on Robinson declared that he had "transformed the company" into "the unrivalled colossus of financial services," having led "what is widely considered the most successful financial services diversification drive of the 1980s."

Shearson's critics aired their views privately, to Robinson, but generally not more than once. An associate of Robinson's who has known him for many years recalls that when he himself expressed reservations about Shearson in the spring of 1988 Robinson "had a quick and violent response: 'We're bigger and better than Merrill Lynch in this area, and we're overtaking them in that one.' " He adds, "You didn't have to be a genius to realize that you were talking to a guy who wanted to own the biggest brokerage firm in the world. Jim, I think, was blindsided by his ambition."

Another Robinson associate seconded this assessment, commenting, "Jim wanted to build a great financial-services company that would be the biggest, or one of the biggest, in the world, and Shearson was critical to that strategy. In fact, if Shearson *wasn't* to grow and become large and significant, then it brought into question the basic thrust he had started on."

Robinson's special treatment of Shearson—as an entity that was exempt from the kind of McKinseyan scrutiny that other divisions suffered—was not without precedent. Fireman's Fund, a property- and casualty-insurance business that American Express had acquired in 1968, was through the late seventies the company's high earner. And one American Express adviser says of Fireman's longtime C.E.O., Myron Du Bain, "He was an arrogant individual who ran it as his private fiefdom for years. There were walls around it as far as American Express's corporate staff was concerned." Robinson, this adviser added, protected Fireman's Fund's desire to go its own, unexamined way. In the early eighties, Fireman's Fund pushed into riskier insurance, reaching for a bigger share of the market by keeping rates low. Then—with what was said to be no warning among American Express's top management—Fireman's Fund began to hemorrhage, suffering combined losses for 1982 and 1983 of four hundred and fifty-two million dollars. American Express was forced to infuse it with two hundred and thirty million dollars in fresh capital, and an additional hundred and eighty-seven million dollars, before it was eventually sold through public offerings.



As characteristic as it may have become for Robinson to grant a degree of license to a high-performing, independent-minded division, his treatment of Shearson was probably most influenced by his relationship with, and view of, Cohen. Events flowed from the fact that there was at Shearson and at American Express "one guy who didn't want his boss as a partner, and one who didn't want to get involved," as one company observer expressed it. Not that Robinson was indifferent, certainly—but, rather, that he believed so intensely in Cohen's prowess that he willingly suspended disbelief. Even today, after all their travails and estrangement, when Robinson speaks about Cohen there is still, sometimes, the echo of a thrall.

Through most of his relationship with Cohen, until its final year, Robinson said recently, it had not been possible to have a real dialogue with him. "Oh, we talked," he said, somewhat dismissively. "But one of Peter's great strengths, and one of the great strengths of the organization," Robinson said, his low-pitched voice, often almost inaudible, rising, clear, "was that they were tough entrepreneurs, who were absolutely convinced that they could do anything, and shoot their way out of any thicket.

"To this day, I still say that he is as smart and knowledgeable about Wall Street and the markets as anybody I've ever known."

Cohen and Robinson would seem to have made the oddest of odd couples—the brusque, posturing tough and the highly polished corporate chief. But one company observer argues that the relationship was far from anomalous, and points to the long line of "tough entrepreneurs" with whom Robinson has consorted, among them Steven Ross, the chairman and co-C.E.O. of Time Warner, with whom he was involved in the Warner Amex cable venture; Weill; Safra; and Salim (Sandy) Lewis, who was the matchmaker for the Shearson-American Express deal, and in whose arbitrage business American Express invested. "I really believe that Jim regularly falls in love with swashbuckling tough guys," this observer told me. "There were times when the people in the travel parts of the company, who were producing these great numbers, would feel a little put down because they weren't swashbuckling, hard-ass tough guys. Jim—so different himself—is drawn to the wild side."

The infatuations, unfortunately, have had less than storybook endings. The Warner Amex relationship ended with the buyout of American Express's interest in a deal that, it has since become clear, was enormously favorable to Warner. Weill ultimately had no choice but to resign from American Express. Safra left the company in anger, and the subsequent bitterness between him and American Express resulted, in July of 1989, in the company's apologizing for having waged a defamation campaign against him. Lewis pleaded guilty in 1989 to having manipulated the price of Fireman's Fund stock in one of its public offerings, and has recently testified before a grand jury that is, according to several people, continuing to look into possible culpability at the top of American Express. And then there is Cohen.

"Jim has never really gotten close to any of the people who worked with him in business—it was no different with Sandy or Edmond or Peter," the company observer continued. "There has typically been a marvellous honeymoon period—based not on closeness but, rather, on a kind of captivation, an enthusiastic commitment to the idea of starting this thing (whatever it was for each of them). And then—certainly in the case of Peter—it has ended in tragedy."

ROBINSON'S extended honeymoon with Cohen, which had spanned most of the eighties, ended with Shearson's defeat in the battle for RJR Nabisco, in late 1988. There had been some strains prior to that. In the spring of 1988, Shearson represented a British firm, Beazer P.L.C., in its hostile bid for the Koppers Company, an industrial conglomerate, in Pittsburgh. Shearson, moreover, would own forty-five per cent of the acquiring entity—an avant-garde play in merchant banking, for a major investment bank to be a principal in a hostile deal. Beazer and Shearson eventually won control of Koppers, but only after a damaging battle; both Shearson and American Express were furiously attacked by local officials, and Koppers employees were televised cutting their American Express cards in half. Some mailed the remnants to Robinson. "Koppers *killed* Jim," one American Express adviser recalls. "Sending him those cut-up cards was like tearing up his mother."

After Koppers, Robinson said recently, he and Cohen "started having conversations about how it's one thing to be the street fighter as you grow up, but when you get to be a certain size in an industry, then you take on the burdens of responsibility in that industry, and you can't operate the same way." He was referring, Robinson added, not only to hostile takeovers but "to the quality of the work they were doing, the style, the image, the vibrations they gave off."

These were, however, just a few minor discords. The Robinson-Cohen relationship was essentially harmonious as they embarked together on a twenty-five-billion-dollar LBO—the biggest in history—with Shearson representing RJR Nabisco's president and C.E.O., F. Ross Johnson, an American Express director and one of Robinson's closest friends, who, with his management group, made a bid to take the company private. That initial bid—disastrously low—triggered a struggle for control of the company which, after nearly three months of maneuvering and countermaneuvering and an enormous escalation in price, was won by the leveraged-buyout firm of Kohlberg Kravis Roberts & Company (K.K.R.). At the outset, the deal had looked like a godsend for Shearson: earnings for 1988 were flagging, and it could have meant two hundred million dollars in up-front fees alone; and it could have placed Shearson in the vanguard of merchant-banking firms. By the time it was over, Shearson was humiliated, pilloried in the press as a model of ineptitude, and Cohen, who had led the Shearson team despite being a novice in multibillion-dollar

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buyouts, bore the full force of the public derision.

It was Cohen's first highly publicized personal failure. He was shaken, and, with his fall from grace, Robinson seems to have looked at him with new eyes. Robinson told me that in January of 1989 "Peter and I spent time together. It was really the first time he realized he was mortal. And you could have a dialogue. He was trying to do all things himself all over the world, and I said, 'You're going to have to focus on the management.' The organization was not working in a way that allowed him to go from Taiwan to London doing deals, and he realized it by that time."

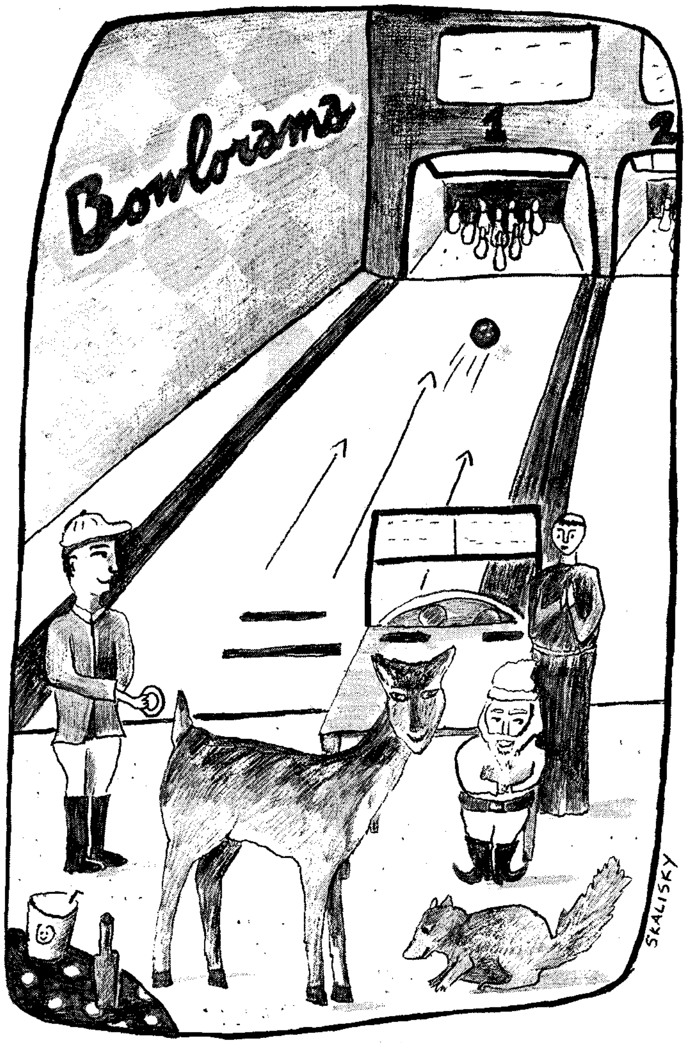
The RJR debacle was not the only blow Shearson sustained in late 1988 and early 1989. In fact, other blunders were occurring with a terrible regularity that bespoke more than just bad luck or an occasional error in judgment—rather, some core institutional failing. The managers of Shearson's Boston Company subsidiary overstated its 1988 earnings; these were subsequently reduced by thirty million dollars. Shearson had to write off nearly a hundred and forty-one million dollars in its holdings in the securities of MCorp, a troubled Texas bank. After Shearson spent millions of dollars in legal fees and other expenses to devise a new security—"unbundled stock units"—it had to be shelved, both because of a Securities and Exchange Commission ruling and, even more embarrassing, because of a lack of market interest. Shearson's Balcor subsidiary stopped selling real-estate limited partnerships (it had raised more than three and a half billion dollars for these partnerships from more than four hundred thousand investors) not long after Hardwick Simmons, Shearson's head of retail at the time, let slip over the firm's in-house communications system that one in four of those partnerships was in trouble. All these disasters, moreover, were taking place against a backdrop of reduced earnings—reflecting a steep downturn on Wall Street—and the defection, in a steady stream, of some of Shearson's senior talent.

In January of 1989, Cohen concluded that Shearson—its tangible net worth severely diminished by the Hutton acquisition—needed an infusion of about a billion dollars in equity capital to bolster its balance sheet. He had directed Shearson's expansionism with Robinson's full endorsement, and with the confidence, therefore, that he had the resources of American Express behind him. Now Cohen spoke with Robinson about American Express's contributing that capital or some portion of it. One option that Cohen urged was for American Express to buy in those shares of Shearson which were publicly owned; this would have the added advantage of allowing Shearson to address its problems in private. Cohen continued to urge this on Robinson—in April, in June, in October.

Buying Shearson in, however, was the opposite of what Robinson had been saying publicly for the past two years that he wanted to do: to bring American Express's stake below fifty per cent, so that Shearson, with its cyclical earnings, could be deconsolidated from the American Express balance sheet. "I told him, 'That's going contra-strategy, we don't want to buy it in,' " Robinson said to me. As for the billion dollars, "that was an easy thing for him to say," Robinson continued. "He brought it up with our board, and they said, 'On what basis? . . . You've got unacceptable return on assets, inadequate return on equity. What's the justification?' "

In March of 1989, Lou Gerstner was hired away from American Express—where he had grown frustrated by his inability to have all divisions report to him—to become the chief executive of RJR Nabisco, for K.K.R., the victor in the RJR battle. Robinson assumed the presidency slot that Gerstner vacated. Earlier, some at Shearson thought that Cohen might have been a candidate, but he was no longer, and by this time he had become convinced that Robinson was plotting his demise. In what one of Cohen's friends refers to as "Peter's conspiracy theory," Cohen thought he saw the hand of Robinson—or, more precisely, of Robinson's wife, Linda, of the Robinson, Lake, Lerer & Montgomery public-relations consulting firm—behind negative stories about him, or speculation about his deteriorating relationship with Robinson, that began to appear in the press that spring.

Cohen's discomfort grew after discussions, later in the spring, with the *Wall Street Journal* reporter Bryan Burrough, who was then working with John Helyar on "Barbarians at the Gate," the book about the RJR Nabisco takeover. Burrough reportedly told Cohen that Linda Robinson, who had been Ross Johnson's public-relations consultant in the RJR deal, had been holding conversations on behalf of Johnson, Shearson's client, with



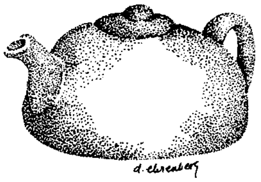
LAWN STATUARY'S DAY OFF

Henry Kravis, Shearson's competitor, in an effort to bring Shearson and K.K.R. together in a joint bid. Neither Cohen nor anyone on the Shearson team had been aware of Linda Robinson's back-channel maneuverings.

Cohen's strained relationship with the Robinsons was exacerbated by the Safra affair, which also began to unfold at American Express that spring. In 1978, during a one-year estrangement from Weill, Cohen had worked for Safra at his Republic National Bank, in New York, and he had, and has, a very close, familial relationship with him. Then, in 1983, it was Cohen who brought Safra to American Express, negotiating the purchase of Safra's Trade Development Bank for five hundred and fifty million dollars. The unlikely union of Robinson and Safra failed after two years, and Safra resigned from American Express. By 1986, it had become apparent to American Express that when a non-compete agreement Safra had made with American Express expired, in 1988, he intended to open a rival bank, in Geneva. Before long, Safra or companies associated with him began to hire away American Express employees. American Express officials were livid: they felt that the company had paid a fortune to buy Safra's bank, largely because they thought they were also buying its brilliant progenitor, and now not only had he departed but he was taking away key executives and, they believed, soliciting important clients.

American Express commenced an investigation of—and campaign against—Safra. To spearhead its operation, it hired an individual named Giuseppe Antonio (Tony) Greco, who has done free-lance work for American Express for a number of years. Greco—said by one person to be an informant for various governmental agencies here and in Italy—has a record of more than half a dozen arrests, most dating back to the early seventies, on charges that included failure to register a gun and, in 1982, receiving stolen property; these charges were all, ultimately, dropped. Working with Greco was Susan Cantor, an American Express employee who also—when Robinson was attempting to promote a solution to the Third World debt crisis—travelled to Latin America with Robinson, as his "advance" person.

American Express filed a criminal complaint against Safra in Geneva for unfair competition, alleging, among other things, the hiring away of American Express employees. In addition, American Express fought the granting of a Swiss banking license to Safra. The criminal complaint was eventually dismissed, and the license granted. Safra opened his new bank in Geneva in March of 1988, and did indeed, according to one American Express adviser, "take away at least a billion dollars of business" from American Express.



Meanwhile, press articles describing Safra's alleged links to drugs, money laundering, and even murder began to appear in various parts of the world. Safra hired his own team of investigators and, apparently, traced the source of some of these stories to American Express. In one instance, the French weekly *Minute*—when it was sued (successfully) by Safra for its defamatory articles—produced from its files, as support for what it had published, a *Life* magazine article on the Mafia, which it claimed mentioned people and companies associated with Safra. The article bore a double fax imprint; it had been faxed from American Express Corporate Communications in New York, and, the following day, from an American Express Europe Ltd. office in London. Later, after Robinson apologized to Safra, the director of *Minute*, Jean-Claude Goudeau, wrote an angry letter to Robinson, berating American Express for having victimized *Minute* with "a clever brainwashing campaign."

Having assembled his evidence, Safra confronted Robinson in the spring of 1989; and it was natural that over the next several months Cohen—given his relationship with Safra—would act as an intermediary between the two bitter antagonists. In the end, the matter was resolved with Robinson's apology and an agreement by American Express to contribute eight million dollars to four charities named by Safra. Several days after this settlement became public, Harry Freeman—American Express's executive vice-president of corporate affairs and communications, and Robinson's good friend, who had worked with Robinson for years to foster his image as a corporate statesman—retired, referring, in a letter to Robinson, to "mistakes . . . made on my watch." It was a move that served to further shield Robinson, who had, of course, known of the investigation of Safra but claimed that he had had no knowledge of what he characterized, in a letter to Safra, as the "unauthorized and shameful effort to use the media to malign you."

It had been a tawdry chapter, nonetheless, for a man who has referred to himself (with a rare touch of irony) as "Boy Scout Robinson," who has been homiletic on the subject of quality, and who recently had the corporate bylaws changed so that he might receive a new title—Chief Quality Officer. The scandal had certainly taken place on Robinson's watch as much as on Freeman's, and had been the result of no mean effort; according to one person close to American Express, Greco had received fees of close to seven hundred thousand dollars over a roughly two-year period, and the preponderance of those fees had been paid not by Freeman but by Robert Smith, the C.E.O. of American Express Bank, who retired several months before Freeman (after it was discovered, though not publicly disclosed, that he had misused corporate funds), and who had reported to Robinson.

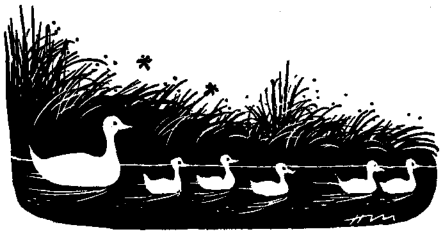
The entire episode increased Cohen's sense of vulnerability. According to friends, he felt that it could not please the Robinsons to think of his knowing, from Safra and his people, the information that Safra's investigators had been able to gather about American Express. The Robinsons might well be wondering where Cohen's true allegiance lay. And Cohen was aware that there were those at American Express—especially at American Express Bank—who believed that, as a result of its own investigators' efforts, American Express had had the real firepower in this fight, and that if its lawyers (and, probably, its image-conscious chairman and C.E.O.) had not been battle-shy it could have gone to court and, in a libel suit, won the day. It was, in that sense, a recalcitrant and somewhat uncertain peace that had been struck. This was underlined for Cohen when, at a social gathering just a month after the settlement, Linda Robinson reportedly remarked to him that all that had been said about Safra in the American Express campaign—and apologized for—was probably true anyway. Linda Robinson vigorously denies having made this comment.

In August, Cohen, anxious to regain Robinson's favor, finally acceded to something that Robinson had long urged upon him: he called McLain Stewart, the McKinsey partner who for decades had been in charge of the American Express relationship, and asked that McKinsey perform a study of Shearson. This was no longer the Cohen who had made it plain that he attended the McKinsey sessions only under duress but, rather, as Stewart commented, "a new Peter Cohen, asking for help." Also at Robinson's urging, Cohen hired Roger Ailes to advise and coach him.

It was, however, too late for newfound humility, or Ailes, or a McKinsey study, to save Cohen. The more pressing the firm's problems, the more erratic and withdrawn Cohen became. He began to rely more and more heavily on his aide-de-camp, Andrea Farace—a thirty-three-year-old investment banker, intelligent and extremely capable but hardly seasoned enough to assume Cohen's responsibilities. Costs continued to spin out of control. Cohen had stressed to his lieutenants the need for cost-cutting, but his actions had belied his words. After the two senior executives with shared responsibility for Shearson's international activities rejected the idea of expanding a small office in Taipei into a major branch, Cohen overrode their opposition and announced the expansion.

It was not American Express but an external monitor—Moody's Investors Service—that finally called a halt, at the end of October. While Cohen was in Taipei, opening the firm's tenth major overseas branch, Moody's announced that it was putting Shearson on "credit watch," with an eye to downgrading its commercial paper, or corporate I.O.U.s. (Shearson, like other securities firms, borrows heavily in the commercial-paper market, and the increase in cost of capital that would result from such a downgrading would have an adverse impact on profits.) The review was triggered by Moody's concern about the level of risk that Shearson was taking in some of its businesses (bridge loans, for example), in light of its capital position: its capital, of two billion dollars, included about $1.7 billion of good will—an intangible asset (the amount by which the purchase price exceeds the book value of an acquisition) that must, however, be written off against earnings over a period of many years—much of it from the Hutton acquisition, which meant that it had only about three hundred million dollars of tangible net worth.

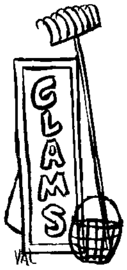
In view of the crisis, the McKinsey group abbreviated its study, in order to make recommendations quickly. It urged a management shakeup, which was carried out: Shearson's president and chief operating officer, Jeffrey Lane, who had been Cohen's colleague for nearly twenty years but had had two of Shearson's albatrosses, the Boston Company (marred by its overstatement of earnings) and Balcor, reporting to him, was demoted, and new talent (much of it from the old Lehman contingent) was raised up from the ranks. McKinsey also recommended that better management methods be instituted. It had found that there were no agreed-upon profit-and-loss statements for the firm's various departments—a situation not uncommon in Wall Street firms. Because costs among departments in these firms are often shared, cost allocation is difficult ("a Gordian knot," as one investment banker put it) and—among highly competitive employees whose bonuses are dependent upon their units' profitability—open to widely differing interpretation. Consequently, Shearson's profit-and-loss statements seemingly showed every division to be making money while there were, in fact, huge losses. (At one executive meeting in the fall of 1989, where, once again, no agreement could be reached, Shearson's chief financial officer, Robert Druskin, finally declared dryly, "What we're going to do is report each month what everybody *thinks* they did, instead of what they did.") Ultimately, this meant that huge bonuses were being awarded on the basis of highly subjective measures of profitability; there was, in effect, little accountability; and which activities were profitable and which were not remained, to some degree, mysterious.



But management initiatives, vital as they might be over the long term, did not go to the heart of the immediate problem, which was Shearson's desperate need for equity capital. In late November, Robinson told Cohen that he had found a way to raise at least two hundred and fifty million of the approximately nine hundred million dollars needed to satisfy the rating agencies: by bringing in the Revlon Group's chairman and C.E.O., Ronald Perelman, as an equity investor in Shearson. Perelman, a former small-time entrepreneur who had become a pioneer of sorts with his hostile takeover of Revlon, in 1985 (it was the first Drexel Burnham Lambert junk-bond-financed hostile takeover of a major company to succeed), had since shown himself to be an able operator of the company, and had assiduously attempted to shed his raider's image and achieve a patina of respectability. Linda Robinson, a member of the Revlon board, was also a public-relations consultant to the company; her firm was—and still is—on a retainer to Revlon. (Michael Milken, the junk-bond impresario, who recently pleaded guilty to six felony counts, has also been a client; on his behalf, she led an effort to discredit a book I wrote about him.) The Robinsons and the Perelmans belonged to the same highly visible social set in New York. Robinson—aware that his wife was widely believed to have played matchmaker here, and perhaps wanting to dispel the notion, also current, that he had become mesmerized by yet another aggressive entrepreneur (his wife)—volunteered to me that the idea of Perelman's coming in as an investor was not his wife's but his own.

Having a substantial equity stake in a major securities firm apparently had a recurring allure for Perelman. In 1987, he had attempted to acquire a twelve-per-cent stake in Salomon but was rebuffed; Salomon invited the investor Warren Buffett in instead. Now the overwhelming majority of Shearson's partners were no happier about the prospect of Perelman as a major shareholder than their colleagues at Salomon had been. In fact, the lone Shearson executive who favored Perelman was Tom Hill, and not only was Perelman a client and friend of Hill's but Hill, in the view of several of his associates, aspired to run Shearson, and believed that Perelman's entry would make his appointment more likely.

One Shearson investment banker who had heatedly opposed Perelman told me that Perelman's purported metamorphosis from raider to operator carried little weight with those whom he had consulted. "I was besieged by bankers as well as corporate clients," he told me. "Perelman may sell in New York, but once you cross that river"—he glanced toward the expanse of the Hudson that flows past the financial district—"it's a different world. He doesn't sell in Wichita or in Houston or in Chicago. And it is not the right ownership for a firm that has to deal with a variety of industrial constituencies, where—especially now, in 1990—'trust' and 'stability' are the watchwords."



The proposed terms of the deal, moreover, did nothing to diminish the disadvantages of Perelman. Indeed, he was insisting that American Express guarantee the loan he would receive to invest in Shearson; his borrowing costs would thus be reduced, because American Express had a higher credit rating than Perelman. In effect, American Express would be financing Perelman in the deal. Also, American Express was to provide Perelman protection should the price of the stock fall, in return for his sharing some of the upside. As clear as it was to many who are knowledgeable about this deal that its terms would make Robinson and the American Express directors objects of ridicule, Robinson did not view it this way. He was enthusiastic about the deal. According to several observers, however, there was little or no support for Perelman among other American Express officials. And, one person told me, Howard Clark, Sr.—the former chairman and C.E.O. of American Express, who was a director of Shearson and an adviser to the American Express board, with which he had a monumental influence—thought the idea was "crazy," not only because of Perelman himself but also because of the interrelationships with Linda Robinson and Revlon. "Howard hates that kind of hocus-pocus," this person commented, adding, "They're all part of the circle—Perelman, Kravis, and Robinson. And what matters isn't the well-being of companies but keeping the circle going."

The Perelman deal did have a small coterie of supporters. There was Joseph Flom, a founder of the law firm Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom; he was the adviser whom Robinson had kept virtually at his side since the Moody's announcement precipitated the crisis. Flom had been close to Perelman for years, and Flom's protégé Donald Drapkin, formerly at Skadden, is now a vice-chairman of Revlon. There was Vernon Jordan, Jr., a partner in the law firm of Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld, who was a member of both the Revlon and the American Express boards. And there was, of course, Linda Robinson. As one person commented, "These people are all friends. Joe, Linda, Ron Perelman, Vernon, and Jimmy were all on the phone together all the time. So the thing continued longer than it should have."

What finally laid it to rest was a leak to the *Times*, which reported on December 7, 1989, that discussions were being held between American Express and Perelman about his buying up to 9.9 per cent of Shearson. Robinson points to that leak (and the concomitant turmoil at Shearson) as the reason the deal did not go forward. "It came out in a polarized fashion," he says. "We didn't have an opportunity to manage it properly, so it could be understood. If there hadn't been the leak, and we'd reached agreement, then I think it could have been positioned as Perelman being somebody who is very astute, successful, and with a strong track record . . . so it could have been positioned as a very positive program."

The leak made Robinson "madder than hell," he acknowledges. And he has his views of how it happened. Cohen—after hearing the reactions of his senior people at Shearson, and perhaps also fearful for his own future—told Howard Clark, Jr., then the chief financial officer of American Express, that if the Perelman deal went forward he would resign. According to two associates, Cohen's opposition led Robinson to conclude that the leak had emanated from him—not necessarily that Cohen had done the leaking himself (he is known to be anything but savvy in his dealings with the press) but, more likely, that he had influenced one of his lieutenants to do so. In the

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view of several people close to Robinson, it was Cohen's opposition to the Perelman deal—and Robinson's conviction that he had been instrumental in its leaking—which snapped the last threads between the two men. "Peter signed his death warrant," one commented.

THE coup de grâce came in early January of this year, with the publication of Burrough and Helyar's "Barbarians at the Gate." Achieving almost instant acclaim on Wall Street, ultimately reaching No. 1 on the *Times* best-seller list, "Barbarians" became, in effect, the Bible on the RJR deal. And if there had been even a vestige of doubt that Cohen was history—Cohen, whom the book depicts as a crude, thuglike character who proceeded, with his flawed judgment and general bad demeanor, to consign the deal to ignominious failure—this book removed it.

Among all the errors committed by Shearson and RJR's Ross Johnson, what was probably the cardinal one—the one that irrevocably tipped the scales against the team—was the management agreement, the central document that laid out, among other things, how the profits in the deal would be split among the investors; under certain maximal conditions, it would have allowed management to receive a gargantuan twenty per cent, or even more. Once this agreement was leaked to the press (in a *Times* story that said the pact might ultimately be worth as much as two billion dollars), it did not matter that Johnson insisted that the management package would never be worth that much, and that he had always meant the profits to be shared among a large body of employees; nor did it matter that the deal's various permutations ultimately reduced it to a fraction of its original size. The agreement's disclosure had fixed an image of Johnson in the public mind—an image that was eventually reflected on the cover of *Time,* where the caption "A GAME OF GREED" appeared above his picture. And it meant that in a situation where there was a competitive bid, in this, the most publicized takeover in history, the board of RJR Nabisco would not be eager to award the company to the Johnson management group.

Robinson appears to have been knowledgeable about this ill-conceived document almost from its genesis. Immediately after it was drafted, Johnson says, he discussed it with Robinson, "as a friend and an adviser." He adds, "Jim didn't *read* it then, but he knew what was in it in substance." That seems only reasonable, inasmuch as Robinson was heavily involved in the deal from the outset. Its principal, after all, was one of his best friends; his wife was working for that principal and his team; it was an epic deal, likely to mean an initial two hundred million dollars in fees to Shearson; and, besides, Robinson has always loved deals. One person involved points out, "In the beginning, there were only two issues, pricing [of the bid] and the management agreement. There wasn't much debate over pricing, but there certainly was over the management agreement. That was *the* issue that would determine whether we at Shearson would do this deal or not." And Cohen yielded to the bulk of Johnson's exorbitant demands only after Robinson "made it clear [to Cohen] that it was not something to be pushed at that time," one of four people involved with Cohen and Robinson in the deal told me. "He said he knew it was rich. But, he said, 'I know Ross, and we'll fix it when we have to.' "

"Barbarians" presents a different picture. The book declares that there was a heated dispute between the Shearson team and the Johnson team over Johnson's demands for the agreement; that Johnson, irate, telephoned Robinson late at night, and told him he was furious. "Robinson, who hadn't been following the group's progress in detail, didn't understand everything Johnson said," the book states. Robinson called Cohen and told him to "settle things down." Cohen and his teammates then yielded to Johnson's demands, and that, the book has it, was the first and last that Robinson ever heard of the blighted management agreement until weeks later, when, on reading it, he was appalled by its excess, and knew that it was "a public relations disaster waiting to happen." He told Johnson that it must be changed, Johnson more or less agreed, and everyone else on the team also agreed. But somehow the changes did not get made, and the document was leaked.

In this version of events—which is also the one that Robinson presented to me in a recent interview—the most that Robinson can be faulted for is not having got the facts on the dispute before telling Cohen to settle it down, and, later, not having made sure that the changes were quickly made.

A less telling episode for the deal's outcome, but one that has been widely read as an illustration of Cohen's—purported, in "Barbarians"—poor judgment and offensive personality, concerns a letter that Cohen sent to John Weinberg, the venerable senior partner of the investment-banking firm of Goldman, Sachs, midway through the deal. In this letter Cohen accused Goldman, Sachs, as banker to the LBO firm of Forstmann Little, of having gained access to confidential information about RJR Nabisco at a time when Forstmann considered joining the Shearson group, and then of having used that information to induce others to join Forstmann in what might have become a competing bid. Incensed, Weinberg wrote a reply stating that his partners had made it clear from the outset that they might proceed independently, and thus had had no confidentiality agreement to breach. And he scolded Cohen for wasting "your and my time with insults or threats—particularly when you have not gotten your facts straight."

Although Cohen signed the letter, it was hardly a solo enterprise. It had been drafted by Shearson's lead attorney on the RJR deal, and was reviewed at a dinner meeting at Cohen's apartment by both Linda and Jim Robinson and by about half a dozen other people on the Johnson-Shearson team. A copy of the draft was passed around to each person, and comments were taken. The recollection of several of those present at the dinner is that Linda Robinson took the most active hand in editing the letter, and that, in any event, the changes were minor—that it met with general approval.

According to "Barbarians," however, the letter appears to have been the handiwork of Cohen—and, certainly, to have gone unseen by both Robinsons.

There is no mention of the drafting, the wide review, the editing—the Weinberg letter is simply quoted, and is followed by a single sentence: "After reading the letters . . . Jim Robinson called Cohen and, in no uncertain terms, suggested he didn't care to read any more examples of Shearson's penmanship."

That Cohen and his Shearson teammates made tactical errors in their failed bid for RJR Nabisco and that Cohen did not comport himself with grace at every moment in this highly pressurized situation are not at issue. What *is* remarkable about "Barbarians" is the degree to which the book vilifies Cohen while taking such pains to exculpate Robinson. It stands as the latest testament to Robinson's proved ability over the past decade—an ability perhaps enhanced by his wife's professionalism in the five years since their marriage—to manage his press so deftly that his image has, over all, been burnished by his successes but not tarred by his mistakes.

There could not have been a more propitious moment than this one, when Wall Street was being saturated by "Barbarians," for Robinson to free himself of Cohen. The book of record had held Robinson blameless in the RJR debacle, and had utterly discredited Cohen—he would have no voice with which to protest. He had become a decisive liability. And it was difficult to imagine how—with "Barbarians" having popularized the episode, so humiliating to Cohen, of Linda Robinson's going behind his back to negotiate with Kravis—Cohen and the Robinsons could possibly continue their corporate life together.

Linda Robinson's actions had been anomalous in two respects: first, that she, a public-relations consultant, was performing what is ordinarily a role of a mergers-and-acquisitions adviser; and, second, that she should have done so without informing any of her teammates from Shearson (she was representing Johnson, as they were). Thus, she arranged a meeting between the two sides, K.K.R. and Shearson, which *her* side attended unaware that she had arranged the meeting and, furthermore, that she had already indicated to the other side which concessions were theirs for the asking. (In the end, it was all futile, since the two sides could not reach an accord, and became bitter antagonists.)

"It's so lovely out here you wonder why they have it so far from the city."

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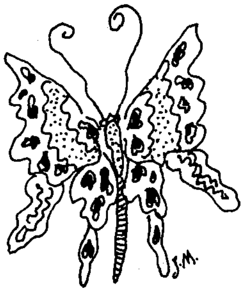
While "Barbarians" set the public stage for Cohen's dismissal, events at home, at Shearson, helped to make it timely. After the Perelman deal was killed, Shearson had attempted to raise about two hundred and fifty million dollars in a public offering. This proposed offering, while it could have been completed, had not been going well: it was a terrible time for the stocks of securities firms; Cohen's performance in the road show was wanting; the stock price was inexorably falling; and Robinson had a growing sheaf of letters, received from retail brokers across the country, urging Cohen's removal. Cohen, in his excitement at discovering the outside world, had forgotten a fundamental lesson taught him years ago by Weill, the master, nonpareil, at cultivating his sales force; he had neglected what should have been his loyal base.

So, at about 5 P.M. on January 29th, as a *Wall Street Journal* party for Burrough and Helyar was getting under way downstairs, in the World Financial Center—a celebration to which all the characters in the book were invited—Robinson summoned Cohen to his office and told him he was being replaced by Howard Clark, Jr., American Express's chief financial officer and the son of Robinson's predecessor.

AFTER a highly publicized tragicomic series of fits and starts, which had lurched along for several months while Shearson employees became increasingly demoralized and the firm's business deteriorated, American Express brought the sorry episode to a conclusion in early March: it announced that it would buy in the roughly thirty per cent of Shearson stock that was owned by the public. That move meant that since December of 1989 American Express would, in the end, have injected Shearson with roughly $1.35 billion in cash and stock. This outcome was, in Robinson's term, "contra-strategy"—the exact opposite of the intention he had been expressing publicly for nearly three years.

It was also the very plan—except that it would now cost roughly three hundred and fifty million dollars more—that Cohen had urged upon him a year earlier. At that time, Robinson had been unwilling to let American Express pay the price for Shearson's mistakes, and thus return it to a solid footing; that would, in all likelihood, have averted the enormous toll, both human and institutional, of the past year, as the firm unravelled in the public spotlight. Now, overtaken by events and having lost control of the situation, Robinson had no choice.

Since December, when the Perelman deal fell through, Robinson, his team of advisers, and the Shearson team had been adrift, buffeted by this proposal and that. "Nobody knew what to do—we could not make a decision," one participant recalls. "We needed nine hundred million. Every morning and every evening, people—often serving their own interests—would come up with an idea, and it would have to be explored. Things reached the point where I would walk into someone's office and if I interrupted a conversation between two people they would be blushing—because they were talking about Idea No. 52!"



In early January, Warren Hellman, a onetime president of Lehman who had since founded an investment-banking firm in San Francisco, appeared on the scene. His firm, Hellman & Friedman, was going to invest seventy-five million dollars in Shearson. When Cohen was fired, Hellman, for reasons that remain obscure, was named Shearson's chairman. He did not actually assume the title until early March, but it was removed from him several days later, when American Express decided to buy in Shearson's public shares, and therefore not accept the seventy-five million dollars. The spurned Hellman demanded a "break-up" fee for his part in the imbroglio, and is to receive one, he says, worth roughly seven to eight million dollars.

At the same moment that Cohen was fired, Clark named C.E.O., and Hellman named chairman, American Express announced that it was going to raise two hundred and fifty million dollars in a "rights" offering—a vehicle used primarily in Great Britain, and thought of by the market as somewhat arcane. The idea was Flom's, and it was sharply disparaged by other advisers. Several weeks later, in late February, the rights offering was withdrawn, and American Express announced that instead it would inject an additional seven hundred and fifty million dollars of capital into Shearson.

Meanwhile, since the weekend before Cohen's firing, Robinson had been negotiating with Weill about a deal with Primerica, the financial-services company that Weill was now heading. Under the terms they ultimately worked out, Weill and his team would run Shearson in a joint venture forty per cent owned by Primerica, forty per cent owned by American Express, and twenty per cent owned by a combination of Nippon Life and the public. However, after it became clear that the banks would be unwilling to finance the deal, and after the rating agencies said that the proposed structuring would cause a downgrading of the new entity's debt unless American Express undertook to guarantee it, the venture was on the verge of collapse. At that point, the fact of the discussions was leaked to the *Times*. (One person involved in the negotiations has said that they were leaked by Weill's organization, perhaps in order to so destabilize the situation at Shearson as to force the deal, perhaps in order to let the world know at least how close it had come.) The story wrongly suggested that the deal was close to completion, and pictured Weill (on the *Times'* front page) as Shearson's homecoming savior. By this time, Shearson had reached a state of emergency. European banks were pulling their credit lines, and Shearson's commercial paper (short-term debt) was being refused by some lenders—omens of imminent collapse, in the fragile economic environment of early 1990, as the overnight demise of Drexel Burnham Lambert had illustrated two weeks earlier. There was no time, therefore, to pursue some variation on the deal with Weill, or with anyone else. American Express—left with one unhappy alternative, its least desired—took it.

Robinson, never reticent when it came to soliciting advice, as his use of scores of McKinsey studies makes plain, had in the previous several months surrounded himself with a virtual army of advisers. There was, of course, McKinsey. There was Flom, and his associates at Skadden, Arps. There was James Wolfensohn, and his associates at the investment-banking firm that bears his name. And there was Felix Rohatyn, with his associates at Lazard Frères.

Asked about this cavalcade, one adviser said that it indicated "just how shaken Jim is." Another suggested that if Gerstner had still been at American Express, Robinson would not have felt a need for such extensive outside aid. Indeed, to some observers the crisis underlined the urgency of Robinson's choosing someone to fill the presidency slot that Gerstner had vacated instead of continuing to occupy it himself.

The Shearson episode, from start to hapless finish, seems to call into question Robinson's long-standing reputation as a consummately talented C.E.O., endowed with all the acumen, judgment, and decisiveness that such a designation implies. That reputation, of course, rests on his dominion over the whole of American Express, of which Shearson has been only a part. But Robinson's dominion over the territory beyond Shearson has also had its share of mistakes and scandals (McGraw-Hill, Fireman's Fund, Safra), and of concepts proved wrong—or, at least, not viable—by time (the diversified financial-services empire, and the synergy of "one enterprise").

It is also true that Robinson has generally been able to recoup a profit, ultimately, from his troubled divisions—Fireman's Fund, after it was sold off, more than repaid what American Express had had to inject into it, and T.D.B. was recently sold at a profit—but that does not erase the years of energy expended on these problems, rather than on some other, healthy (and, presumably, more profitable) enterprises. Of all the major acquisitions made by American Express under Robinson—Shearson (and, through it, Lehman and Hutton), Warner Amex, T.D.B., and I.D.S.—only I.D.S., which was undertaken at Weill's initiative, today continues as a strong and prospering part of American Express.

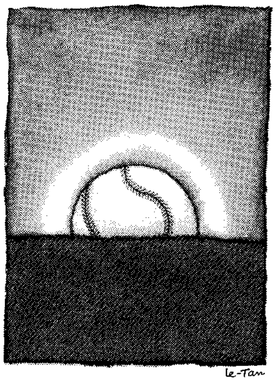
The brightest success of Robinson's tenure is T.R.S., where earnings continue to grow at between fifteen and seventeen per cent each year; last year, T.R.S. contributed eight hundred and thirty million dollars to American Express's total earnings of $1.16 billion. Robinson certainly deserves credit for T.R.S., although a good deal of the credit must also go to Gerstner, who revitalized this company and continued to run it until he left, last year. And it was, of course, Gerstner who had the judgment and the desire to challenge Shearson—but was kept from doing so by Robinson.

When Robinson's supporters are reminded of actions of his in the Shearson saga which may be read as examples of poor judgment or indecisiveness, they tend to soften the point by talking about his "style." Thus, Robinson's failure to keep Cohen in check and to read the warning signals at Shearson is attributed to his belief in decentralization, and to his "hands-off style." And his inept handling of the crisis, as he haphazardly pursued one skewed idea after another, is also described as an aspect of "style." "Jim Robinson's technique is to throw up ideas and let people around him all take a hit at them," one associate of Robinson's told me. "The process percolates, and in the end it's all on the table, and you can see all the facts. In a slow-moving environment, that's not a bad style. In a crisis situation, though, it's very hard to control these ideas. It's like sailing. In good weather, everyone can pull on a rope, and it doesn't matter—the boat goes. But in a storm you need the captain on deck, and he must say, 'You do this.' This was a storm—and there we were, getting a lot of advice and input. But Jim did grab hold at the end. Now he is driving the ship more. He realizes he's in the middle of a storm."

Robinson's future almost certainly hinges on his ability to reverse Shearson's course. Recent events—culminating in a reduction of the price of the Shearson stock that Nippon Life paid thirty-eight dollars a share for in 1987 to fifteen dollars a share now—have brought Nippon to a "state of shock," Henry Duques, of Information Services Corporation, told me. "We are taking to its limits the theory that the Japanese have a long-term perspective," he said. Howard Clark, Sr., too, is said by associates to be disappointed in Robinson's failure to recognize trouble at Shearson earlier. (His dissatisfaction, though, is said to have been tempered somewhat by the appointment of his son as Shearson's new head, particularly since the position, if Howard Clark, Jr., is successful at it, increases his chances of one day heading American Express.) Observers say that the board, through years of masterly cultivation by Robinson, has come to be utterly controlled by him, but that the one voice that could rival his (particularly in this period of turmoil) belongs to the senior Clark.

By taking a staggeringly large restructuring charge of six hundred and thirty million dollars—the largest quarterly loss in the history of Wall Street—Shearson has attempted to give itself, and its chairman and C.E.O., a relatively fresh start. Yet that charge—its size notwithstanding—had some conspicuous omissions. It did not include a five-hundred-million-dollar bridge loan to Prime Computer, Inc. (Shearson, unable to place the debt from this LBO, now understands the optimism inherent in the eighties-coined "bridge" loan.) And it did not include any provisions for losses at First Capital, which has more than a third of its assets invested in junk bonds.

In June of this year, in an effort to clarify accountability and draw greater benefit from the name of Lehman—a hoped-for totem—Shearson Lehman Hutton announced that it would be split into two parts: one division responsible for investment banking and capital markets, and called Lehman Brothers; the other responsible for individual-investor brokerage activities and money management, and called Shearson Lehman Brothers. (Hutton would thus be erased.) Such bifurcation, it was speculated, would facilitate the eventual sale of one or both parts. The move, predictably, was greeted with skepticism within Shearson. Some saw it as an unwise surrendering of the unique franchise that Shearson had worked so hard for (albeit fallen short of)—that of a premier investment-banking firm linked to a massive distribution network. Now, they argued, it would be composed of two more disjunctive and less distinguished parts, neither of them a match for the specialized leaders in its field. One Shearson employee suggested that this attempt to resurrect the old Lehman would carry within it the seeds of its destruction (again), inasmuch as a war had already broken out between its bankers and traders over who deserved greater representation on the division's executive committee. "None of the senior bankers are doing any work, because they're so busy politicking," he told me.



The appointment of Jonathan Linen, a former president of T.R.S., as the president and chief executive officer of Shearson Lehman Brothers underscored statements by both Robinson and Clark about the importance, in their respective views, of bringing the American Express culture to Shearson. As the American Express contingent took over and several of the top Cohen lieutenants resigned, some senior bankers also departed. As one of them explained to me, Cohen and his colleagues had been "a Shearson buffer between American Express and us. Now there is a systematic replacement of the Shearson culture with the American Express culture—and I never signed up to be part of American Express. You've had a fundamentally Jewish firm become part of a Wasp establishment company."

Robinson and Clark share an eagerness to publicly disown Shearson's past and, of course, the man who shaped it—but to do so, if possible, indirectly. Robinson is the more accomplished at this kind of disengagement. While it was already well known that the firm would be cutting back severely on its international presence, since its costs had been enormous, Robinson told the press after Cohen's firing that he gave Cohen credit (taking none himself) for being "the personal architect of the dramatic growth and worldwide positioning" of Shearson. (He also commented on the emotional strain Cohen had endured: "The poor guy has been under incredible pressure.")

Robinson has also told the press that Shearson's acquisition of Hutton was a mistake—speaking with an equanimity born of its having been committed, presumably, by someone else. As events have unfolded—given the extent of Hutton's liabilities (grossly underestimated at the time of its acquisition) and the continuing weakness of the retail market, which never recovered after the 1987 crash—it *was* a mistake. Indeed, all the accumulated losses in the real-estate limited partnerships and in international activities, and all the excesses in planes and art and buildings—ill-conceived as they were—would not have brought the firm to this pass.

If it hadn't been for Hutton, in the opinion of Shearson's chief financial officer, Robert Druskin, Shearson would have had sufficient capital strength to withstand the considerable strain of all the above. Yet the acquisition of Hutton—the only truly fatal flaw in this whole farrago—was enthusiastically endorsed by Robinson and by Gerstner, too. (Moreover, they, and the rest of the board, vetoed the idea of its acquisition's being financed with equity, since that would have diluted American Express's stake in Shearson; it would also, however, have left Shearson's balance sheet much stronger.)

And the Faulkner Center, the giant, two-hundred-million-dollar data-processing center that set the stage for Hutton's acquisition—and had the blessing of American Express and, just two years ago, was lauded in the press as visionary—is now also derided, for its almost mythic processing capability. "Shearson has the capacity to clear trades for all of Wall Street," Flom remarked sarcastically.

Satisfying as it may be to point fingers at the international expansion, and Hutton, and the Faulkner Center, as if they were something other than what they are—all judgments honestly made, with broad consensus, that were proved in varying degrees wrong by time—it is the excesses that lend themselves most to the kind of restorative communal catharsis that scapegoating, from primitive times, has been meant to achieve. But even here the facts belie the exercise, to some degree. The idea of the conference center at Beaver Creek was proposed by former President Gerald Ford (an American Express director and subsequently a Shearson director), who owned a home in Beaver Creek and had become a promoter of the area, presiding over the Jerry Ford Invitational Golf Tournament, nearby. And it was supported by Robinson. The luxurious center was used not only by Shearson but, frequently, by Robinson and other American Express executives. Now, though, it has become emblematic at American Express of the abuses of the Cohen era.

Howard Clark, Jr., whose office was just floors away from Shearson's in the American Express Tower, and who often attended meetings on Shearson's executive floor, described to me his experience upon entering that floor as chairman and C.E.O.: "I noticed there were these pictures on the walls with little plaques next to them, with artists' names on them. I said, 'What is this?' And it turned out it was some very expensive art." He added, "So we're selling that, as we are the planes, and we're *trying* to sell Beaver Creek."

IN this atmosphere, it is not surprising that a settlement between American Express and Cohen was a contested one. As weeks went by during which Cohen and Robinson were unable to reach an accord, Cohen hired the attorney Stanley Arkin to represent him. Reading the hiring of Arkin, who had represented Safra in his threatened suit against American Express, as an attempt to intimidate the company—and, perhaps, reviving unhappy questions about what Safra had told Cohen—American Express engaged Arthur Liman, known for his role as counsel for the Iran-Contra Senate committee and, more recently, as Michael Milken's lawyer.

Robinson removed himself from the settlement negotiations, leaving the matter to the American Express board members and their counsel. Thus, the directors were finally free to deal with Cohen in the absence of his onetime defender, Robinson—and there was, reportedly, some sentiment among them to punish Cohen for his perceived transgressions. (One American Express adviser told me that if Cohen proved intransigent American Express would seek to make him into "a world-class pariah.") In the end, however—nearly five months after Cohen's firing—the agreement that was reached did not appear so punitive. It provided for a settlement valued at roughly ten million dollars—about $2.6 million in severance pay, and the rest being, mainly, the resolution of stock and options agreements he had accumulated over a period of nearly twenty years.

For his part, Cohen agreed to "releases," by which he is prevented from suing all officers and directors of American Express and Shearson, as well as their families. The provision relating to families was novel. Liman, a professional associate of Linda Robinson (they both represented Milken), told the *Wall Street Journal* that it was "my idea"; and it sprang, according to another individual close to American Express, from a concern on the part of the Robinsons that Cohen might sue Linda Robinson for slander. Linda Robinson, therefore, appeared to be a "key beneficiary" of this agreement, as a writer for the *Financial Times* commented—something that might irk American Express shareholders.

While the board ultimately granted Cohen a settlement that was far from shabby, those American Express directors who had harbored an animus toward him have still been able to draw satisfaction from his demise. According to one person close to the board for many years, strains of anti-Semitism, long existing among some of its members, became exacerbated in the mid-eighties, with the advent of the financial entrepreneurs, mainly Jewish, who were challenging and (often with the help of Milken's junk bonds) overthrowing the regimes of the corporate establishment, and who, in the process, were amassing overnight fortunes that dwarfed the holdings and trusts of the beleaguered corporate élite. To these board members, Cohen appeared the archetypal interloper—an arriviste, aspiring to rule what had been their world.

The tensions that existed in the boardroom of American Express, of course, were reflective of what was generally ambient in the business community in the mid- and late eighties. Even before Ivan Boesky pleaded guilty and the entire era began to wind down, leading Jewish lawyers and businessmen had worried about an anti-Semitic backlash—something that is certainly no less a concern now, when public anger at the excesses of the eighties and a hunger for scapegoats are mounting. And the once beleaguered élite, who most resented the encroachments of the financial entrepreneurs, may feel vindicated, now that the challengers with their junk-bond financing appear obsolete, now that the mastermind of the revolution, Milken, is a confessed criminal (along with Boesky and others), now that some of the financial wizards of the eighties have been shown to be not truly wizards but merely men who (with the help of munificent markets) exploited the moment.

All the foregoing, however, makes a case that is prone to overstatement. It is true that the two-hundred-billion-dollar junk-bond market that Milken virtually single-handedly created has been to a considerable degree discredited, through his own, and others', abuses of it; but more's the pity, since it was an inspired innovation, one that at its outset did, in fact, as Milken liked to say, represent the democratization of capital; and the unrest it eventually helped to foment in the inbred, privileged preserves of corporate America was by no means all bad. The ethos of limitlessness, too, that characterized Cohen's Shearson—as well as so many other financial institutions in the eighties—has, of course, been discredited, now that cyclical markets have made those once unseen limits painfully visible, and there are bills (manifested, for example, in Shearson's first-quarter loss of nearly a billion dollars) to be paid. But far-reaching endeavors are apt to involve risk-taking, and some degree of it (albeit far less than occurred, albeit with far better controls in place) was appropriate if Shearson was to become the international colossus that both Robinson and Cohen envisioned.

One danger at this moment, as in any period of reaction, is calcification: a hardening of attitude toward outsiders, a stiffening toward any risk, an enshrining of the status quo—a wholesale rejection, in sum, of the beneficent as well as the pathogenic aspects of the eighties. Shearson, as its culture is subsumed by that of American Express, risks becoming twice victimized—not only by the excesses of the eighties but now by the inhibitions of the nineties. And it is only fitting, at this austere dawn of the new decade, that Cohen's place at Shearson's helm should be taken by Howard Clark, Jr., for Clark is a man so subdued and cautious, so thorough and exacting in his performance of assigned tasks, and so imbued with the earnest rhetoric and politesse of American Express ("We need to worry about the way we do business, not only the business we do"), that he seems studio-cast for his current role as expurgator of the eighties at Shearson (and of its persona, Cohen), and as a deacon for the nineties—in a production that Robinson, some months back, began alluding to as "Patriots at the Gate." —CONNIE BRUCK

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LETTER FROM BUCHAREST

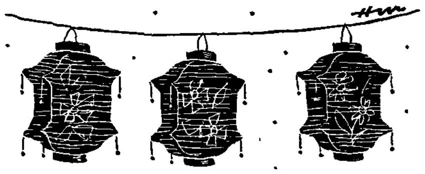
JUNE 22

NINE days ago, at four o'clock on the morning of Wednesday, June 13th, under cover of darkness, hundreds of helmeted riot police armed with billy clubs stormed University Square, below my window in the Inter-Continental Hotel. They razed a tattered tent city that had sprung up across from the university, on the lawn in front of the National Theatre—to the south of the hotel—and routed some twenty hunger strikers and perhaps a hundred other anti-Communist demonstrators who had been occupying the square for fifty-three days. Scores of people were beaten, and swept into police vans. Since there were no other places to run—the square had been sealed off with a police cordon, and buses and trucks were parked end to end across the main boulevards leading to it—many of the demonstrators, startled from sleep, scattered into high-rise apartment buildings fronting on the square, and into the lobby of the Inter-Continental. The police followed some of them in and beat them and took them away.

By daybreak, the authorities had begun erasing all traces of the demonstration, which, although its numbers had dwindled dramatically over the weeks, had brought together a wide range of students, professionals, intellectuals, workers, and drifters in a peaceful protest against the preponderance of former high-ranking Communists in the government of President-elect Ion Iliescu. With a swiftness and diligence unusual in government employees here, dozens of workers had sprung into action and were manning trucks that sprayed the streets and the now naked campground with water and disinfectant. To Romanian journalists standing on the curb outside the Inter-Continental, and to hotel staff members who stood watching with them, the scene was not unfamiliar: last December, the authorities had hosed down the square in exactly the same manner to wash away the blood spilled when troops loyal to Nicolae Ceausescu opened fire on unarmed demonstrators.

The reasons for Iliescu's use of force remain obscure, since less than a month earlier Romanian voters had given him a landslide victory: eighty-five per cent of the Presidential vote and a two-thirds majority in the parliament for his party. Except in a few pockets of anti-Communism in Bucharest and other cities like Timisoara, Brasov, Cluj, and Constanţa, Iliescu and his colleagues were generally revered as the men who rescued Romania from Ceausescu. Most of the country's twenty-three million citizens had watched the December revolution on television, riveted by reports that as many as sixty thousand people had been killed in pitched battles between the Army, which joined the uprising, and Ceausescu's praetorian guard, the Securitate. Romanians learned that they were unique in Eastern Europe: their Stalinist dictator could be toppled only at great human cost. When the new provisional leaders, calling themselves the Front for National Salvation, appeared in the broadcast studio, the people were euphoric with relief and gratitude. In the forefront was Iliescu, the head of the state's technical publishing house—a stocky fifty-nine-year-old engineer with a high forehead and a wide, tight-lipped grin. He was joined by a young, handsome Polytechnic Institute professor, Petre Roman, who was named Prime Minister, and before long the Front included a number of well-known dissidents. Many Romanians remembered Iliescu from the nineteen-sixties, when he was a rising star on the Communist Party Central Committee. Although he fell out with Ceausescu in 1971, he had remained a member of the privileged Party élite, or nomenklatura.

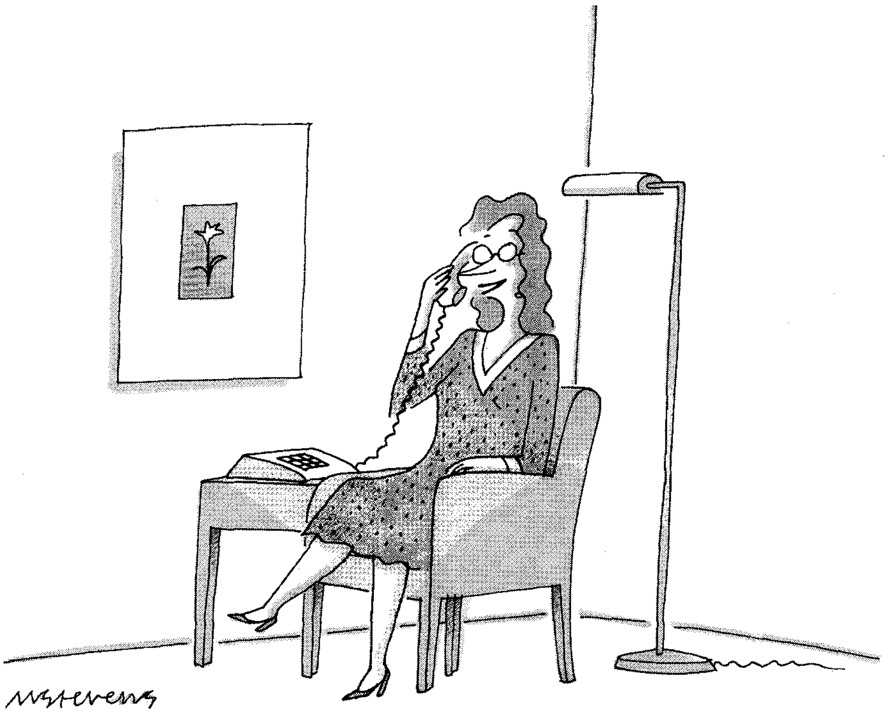
After Ceausescu's execution, Iliescu and the Front reinforced their immense popularity with a series of practical measures to bring Romania within reach of twentieth-century Europe. They turned on the heat and hot water in freezing apartments; they loaded shop shelves with warehoused food intended for export; they made precious imported goods—such as coffee, chocolate, and oranges, which had previously been the perks of the nomenklatura and the Securitate—available to the starving public. During the euphoric first weeks, the Front also abolished the death penalty, released political prisoners, issued passports, abolished the mandatory registration of typewriters, and lifted a ban on abortion.



However, Romania's interim leaders, unlike several of their Eastern European neighbors, did not formally dissolve or reconstitute the powerful Communist Party, which is said to have had four million members. And the presence of former dignitaries of the Party in the interim regime sparked a series of protests—some organized by three newly revived "historical" parties that had been banned by the Communists after the Second World War—calling for the resignation of President Iliescu, the Interior Minister, Mihai Chitac, and other high-ranking ex-Communists.

During those turbulent months, Iliescu, relying on a time-tested practice of his predecessor, rallied the support of the workers, to whom he had promised economic continuity and stability, through avoidance of radical free-market reforms that might have produced unemployment. But his workers, in their first show of support, ran amok when, at the end of January, after a huge anti-government protest in front of government headquarters, pro-Front demonstrators, including workers and miners from outside Bucharest, attacked the headquarters of the two main opposition parties—the National Liberal Party and the National Peasants' Party—forcing the Army to escort a threatened party leader away in an armored vehicle. Writers, students, and other people I know who happened to have beards and wear glasses said that they had not been so openly harassed since the fall of Ceausescu, and that they feared a resurgence of the fierce class hatred between workers and intellectuals which Ceausescu had fostered. Most of the dissidents who had originally joined the regime soon resigned.

The lingering legacy of Ceausescu, the Communist Party, and the Securitate continued to stir criticism from groups as disparate as the intelligentsia and the military, and on February 18th several hundred demonstrators broke into the government headquarters. Iliescu called the young protesters, who ransacked offices and roughed up a deputy prime minister, "counter-revolutionaries," and later said that the authorities had found "Fascist" materials on them. This allusion to the Second World War re-



"*Operator, I'd like to make a person-to-person call, and I'd like to reverse the roles.*"

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vived the terrifying spectre of Romania's Fascist Legion, also known as the Iron Guard. (Soon Iliescu was sweeping all the Front's critics into the category of "Fascists," "extremists," and "Legionnaires.") Iliescu at once made another appeal for the workers' support, and this time the nation's legendary coal miners answered the call in force: they were shipped in by the government, on special trains, all the way from the Jiu Valley, two hundred and fifty miles to the west. Fabled for their toughness and respected for their endurance of primeval working conditions, the miners have long inspired both awe and envy—awe for having stood up to the old regime, envy for commanding salaries more than twice those of other wage earners; they are the aristocrats of Romania's impoverished work force.

Élite they may be, but they come from another world, as I discovered when I rushed over to Victory Square the evening they arrived. Four thousand of them were standing in front of the government headquarters, silhouetted in a haze of cigarette smoke and the dim light of their headlamps. Nearly everything about them—blackened faces, loose-fitting blue-gray shirts and trousers—made them appear to have come out of the nineteenth century. One, a thirty-five-year-old from Petroşani, who had a hacking cough, told me, "We've come to make order in Bucharest, and we won't go back till it's all calm." Another, a twenty-year-old—roughly the age of the Bucharest students—said of the demonstrators, "Too many rights. They demand too many rights."

Meanwhile, upstairs in the government headquarters, the miners' leaders were driving a hard bargain with Iliescu for their pilgrimage; when they left town, early on the morning of February 20th, it was with full stomachs and promises of a substantial pay raise and fewer hours down in the shaft. Iliescu now had them on his side, and thereafter rumors that "the miners are coming" swept through Bucharest at the least sign of unrest.

As winter yielded to spring, Sunday became the day for anti-government protests, and half a dozen anti-Communist groups—including a newly formed independent trade-union federation—took turns marching. Often assembling in Unity Square, opposite Ceausescu's grotesque House of the People, which rises up on the horizon like the Emerald City of Oz, they carried their banners northward up the wide 1848 Boulevard to University Square, stopped there to kneel at a wooden cross erected for December's dead, and then went on to the government headquarters and, finally, the national television station.

In a dozen other cities, demonstrators were also taking to the streets, and it looked as if a national movement might crystallize around a new anti-totalitarian manifesto called the "Proclamation of Timisoara," issued on March 11th. Amid growing fears that the Front would consolidate its power in the May 20th elections, demonstrators everywhere adopted as their main goals the proclamation's "Point 8": that all members of the Party nomenklatura and Securitate be barred from running for office. Their second demand was a television system free of government control. In Bucharest, most of the regular protesters seemed to be teachers, engineers, and professionals, along with some workers and a circle of drifters. The demonstrations apparently did no harm to the government's popular support, but they posed a fundamental moral challenge to Iliescu and the Front. There was also a growing skepticism about whether Romania's revolution was real or was a palace coup carried out by Party apparatchiks who had caught the wave of a spontaneous mass protest that began in Timisoara. "Survivors" of the crackdown on the Bucharest street demonstrations on December 21st and 22nd formed a group called the 21st of December Association and began collecting testimony on the events, hoping to learn the truth about Ceausescu's overthrow. Their leaders—the sculptor Alexandru Nancu and the graphic artist Tania Siperco—and many others pointed out that while most of the buildings in Palace Square were pummelled with bullets or reduced to burned-out shells, the huge, white Central Committee Building of the Communist Party showed no traces of an armed attack, even though it was for a time the headquarters of the interim revolutionary council. The same is true of the television-station buildings. The few seasoned combat reporters who were present during the "pitched battles" say that they can't recall hearing incoming fire—that there may have been no sizable resistance by pro-Ceausescu forces, and that much of the destruction and many of the casualties may have resulted from young, inexperienced Army gunmen firing wildly. In any case, the early estimates of sixty thousand casualties were wildly inflated (later estimates reduced the number to about a thousand), and exhumations from one reported "mass grave" in Timisoara turned out to be bodies from a local morgue.

In early April, I became aware of a new bitterness in the city about the hundreds of citizens who *had* been killed in the streets during the revolution because they had answered the Front's television appeals to come out—unarmed—and defend the Front from the "terrorists." "Where are the 'terrorists' today?" people were asking.

Then, on April 22nd, several thousand people—perhaps the largest gathering since January 28th—led by various groups from Bucharest and a small delegation from Timisoara, marched to the television station and back to University Square, where they briefly blocked traffic on the busy intersections. Two days later, Iliescu unleashed hundreds of riot police in a predawn raid to break up a group of about fifty anti-government demonstrators who had spent the night blocking the eight-lane boulevard at the northern entrance to the square. The reaction to that raid, and to six hundred armed police left behind on guard, brought thousands of demonstrators to the perimeter of the square. With cries of "Assassins!" and "You shot at us in December!," the angry crowd gradually herded the police out of the square, and more and more demonstrators flooded in. Students rushed up to me, shaking with excitement and astonishment at having driven the police from the square without violence.

THE government's raid and the people's resistance to it emboldened the small and divided groups of the anti-Communist opposition. The night of April 24th marked another turning point, for then the Bucharest University Students' League threw in its lot with the demonstrators. A tiny second-floor balcony off a corner window of the geology department became the focal point of nightly demonstrations.

Prime Minister Roman and the others ignored the demonstrators' lofty demands for "truth," and for a thorough housecleaning to rid the government of the men who had served the former regime. They declared the gathering "unauthorized," and treated the crowd's presence as a problem of traffic congestion. Iliescu himself unwittingly gave the demonstration its biggest lift when he contemptuously dismissed the participants as *golani*, or hoodlums. The slur was another reminder of Ceausescu, who in December had called demonstrators *huligani*, or hooligans. That evening, thousands of people turned up with homemade lapel badges reading "*Golan*," and as eminent actors, writers, scholars, and musicians stepped onto the balcony each night thereafter, over a sea of shimmering torches, a roar went up when they hailed their fellow-*golani*.

By May 1st, pup tents had gone up on the theatre's lawn, and huge irreverent caricatures of Iliescu as a bloody-fanged Dracula and Prime Minister Roman as a bare-bottomed lambada dancer adorned the barricades. At night, the square exploded with barbed songs and slogans, and as many as twelve thousand people would gather for demonstrations (a small number, actually, compared with the hundreds of thousands of Czechoslovakian protesters who had packed the streets of Prague last autumn). Meanwhile, in the smoky classrooms behind the balcony, the leaders of the six main opposition groups were attempting to hammer out a program. Their efforts never really coalesced. Hobbled by inexperience and by a deep-rooted distrust of political organizations—and, for that matter, of each other—the leading groups in the square were trapped in fundamental contradictions that are still obstructing political change in Romania. After four decades of Communism combined with Ceausescu's totalitarianism, Romania's opposition had no Lech Walesa, no Vâclav Havel, no political expertise. As campaigning in the Presidential election, scheduled for May 20th, got under way, the oppositionists' aversion to politics and political parties—they refused to join forces with either of the parties that were running candidates against Iliescu—proved suicidal. A sharp division was emerging among the groups. Four of them—the Students' League, the 21st of December Association, the Independent Group for Democracy, and the Association of Former Political Detainees—later joined by the Architecture Students' League, attracted better-educated followers and were more moderate in their tactics. Two other groups—the People's Alliance and the 16-21 December Association, which had organized some of the early demonstrations in March—were consistently more confrontational. The government, meanwhile, exploited the divisions among the groups, offering to meet with some and excluding others, and the opposition was simply no match for the organization and the information apparatus that the Front had inherited from the Ceausescu regime. The demonstrations had practically no effect on voters. Iliescu's popularity blossomed. Tens of thousands of flower-waving supporters flocked to his rallies, squinting in the sun to see him and his handsome young Prime Minister. Some waved banners reminiscent of the personality cult around Ceausescu: "WHEN ILIESCU APPEARS, THE SUN RISES."

The elections took place on May 20th, as scheduled, and most foreign-observer teams gave them their stamp of approval, though they criticized the preëlection violence organized by Iliescu supporters against the opposition. While opposition leaders may dispute the eighty-five-per-cent landslide, no one disputes Iliescu's victory. The Washington *Post*'s columnist Jim Hoagland wrote that the one-sided results of Romania's first election in more than fifty years "do little to dispel a feeling that the country has undergone a prison riot, not a revolution. The toughest and smartest inmates killed the cruel warden and have taken over."

On May 21st, thousands of stunned and demoralized protesters went home, and by week's end the lights on the small corner balcony went off. After heated debate, the organizations most representative of Romania's middle class, intellectuals, and students lowered their tents and withdrew from the square, for they planned to push their claims through the newly elected parliament. One of them, the 21st of December Association, did maintain a single tent, in support of some two dozen hunger strikers who refused to quit. But the People's Alliance and the 16-21 December Association refused to pull out, and quickly threw up a rostrum in front of the two dozen remaining tents. As early as March, Romanians and foreign reporters who attended the small marches had begun to suspect the presence of provocateurs among these two groups. Just before the election, mysterious caches of wooden clubs and sticks had been discovered in some of the tents. Alarmed by the possibility that rumors and panic could provoke violence and police reprisals, the 21st of December Association seized the clubs, locked them up in their headquarters, a few blocks from the hotel, and registered the incident with the authorities.

In the weeks following the election, the nightly speeches of the People's Alliance degenerated into repetitive harangues. The government, meanwhile, had agreed to consider the hunger strikers' demand that Romania be allowed an independent television station. The demonstration in the square seemed to be petering out. Despite renewed protests at the government headquarters by the People's Alliance, no one expected the police action.

At 7 A.M. on June 13th, three hours after the police had converged on the square, the area was still blocked to motor and pedestrian traffic by the cordon of policemen and trucks and buses. Leaving the hotel, I walked past two dump trucks to some piles of debris left on the north side of the former campsite, where hunger strikers had fasted in tents for more than six weeks. In the rubble, I could see their well-worn shoes, scraps of clothing, and an open notebook, densely inscribed, that looked like a personal diary. Bright-colored vitamin pills and some other medicines, nearly priceless in Romania, were spilled over the muddy ground, along with intravenous tubing and packets of brand-new disposable syringes. The government later maintained that drugs had been given to the demonstrators to cause their euphoria.

As workmen shovelled shredded tents and broken glass into the trucks, other men were stripping the university's gray stone walls of remaining tattered posters proclaiming the area a "NEO-COMMUNIST-FREE ZONE." By eight o'clock, the entire intersection had been hosed down. As soon as patches of pavement were dry, road crews began painting shiny new white lines down the center of Balcescu Boulevard.

The sky was overcast, and the mood in the square was menacing. The streets and sidewalks were crawling with beefy plainclothes police, in their legendary ill-fitting suits. In the five months I'd been here, I had never before seen them in such numbers; it seemed as if they had come out of hiding for the first time since the fall of Ceausescu. A fleet of Dacia sedans with official license plates screeched and lurched through the square, carrying off the people whom the plainclothes police were hauling around the corner from the university, kicking and clubbing them on the way. As I stood near a band of Gypsy women turning the soil in front of the theatre, a man supervising the cleanup operation clamped a large fist over the microphone of a tape recorder I was using and yanked me away. When I resisted, he pulled harder and launched into a diatribe. "Democracy is not in the square but away, over there!" he said. "Go home!" A few feet from the hotel, a diminutive French photographer was slugged by plainclothesmen as she tried to cross the street.

As on April 24th, several hundred demonstrators had gathered outside the police cordons within hours of the raid, shouting, "Down with Iliescu!" Near the rear of the university, another group of several hundred was demanding the release of three architecture students who had been carried away. The crowds on the street were gathering force, chanting, "We want the arrested people freed!" They were led by a front line of young men, none of whom looked familiar from the months of demonstrations I had attended. They looked like drifters, and they looked violent. Students and adults ranging in age from twenty up to about forty-five joined their ranks. Several hundred police reinforcements arrived with riot sticks, helmets, and shields, and the two groups surged back and forth on the narrow stone street next to the university, with the crowd throwing rocks and chunks of brick. Then one of the demonstrators hurled a homemade gasoline bomb, and shortly afterward a police van went up in flames.

By midafternoon, the police, who were, on the whole, restrained, had forced the crowd back, away from the square. Then they were themselves repulsed by another volley of rocks and gas bombs. With my friend and interpreter Sofian, I was running alongside the police, many of whom were ducking out around the corner of the Institute of Architecture, clearly to avoid

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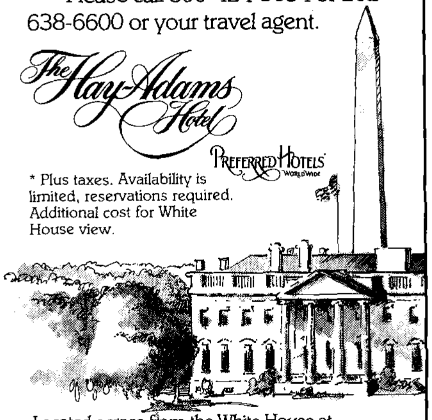

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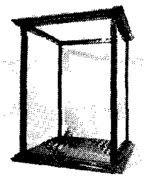

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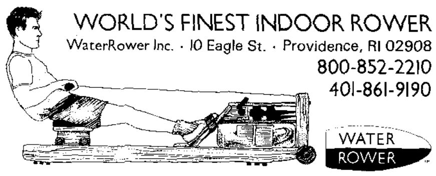

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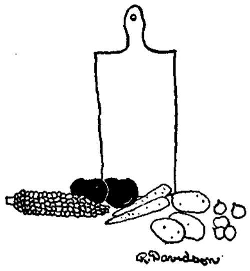
taking part in the struggle. It started to rain, and one of them said to his friends, "Let's just go home." I asked a policeman who was in his early twenties how he felt about confronting young people like him. "Yeah, I feel like a sucker," he said, in English. "You know what I mean? They tell us to come here. For what? To wait until it's 'quiet.' "

Around three o'clock, the square rang with a piercing chorus of warning whistles from the crowd. Another navy-blue wave of police, accompanied by a few soldiers, swept across the square from the southeast corner to buttress the line at the university. They were greeted by a barrage of stones. A gasoline bottle crashed among them and set fire to a young soldier's leg. A howl went up from the police, and they scrambled to pick up the stones that had been thrown. There was a moment when the noise of the advancing crowd changed from a steady warning cry to a dense roar, which seemed to carry the mass of demonstrators along by its own force. They suddenly broke into a run toward the police, and, to avoid the stampede, I ran with Sofian toward the side wall of the university. With my face flattened against the wall, I felt stones and bricks hitting the wall all around us. Sofian gallantly stood in front of me to take the impact of any stones. About half a minute later, we turned toward the square. By then it was pouring rain. The cheering demonstrators, many carrying open umbrellas, chased the police back across the square to the southeast corner. Then the young men from the front line charged the police vehicles that were blocking the square, commandeered some, and set others on fire. By 5 P.M., the rain clouds had lifted, but a thick sheet of acrid black smoke hung over central Bucharest.



By six, a breakaway group from the earlier crowds had attacked three of the buildings most symbolic of the state: the city police headquarters; the building containing the passport archives of the Ministry of the Interior, believed to have housed the intelligence service of the Securitate; and the headquarters of the Interior Ministry, which had run the Securitate. Along the way, they seized more than a dozen official Dacias, tore them apart, overturned them, and set them on fire. Everyone was stunned by the unexpectedly swift escalation of the violence. We were also stunned by the inaction of the police, firemen, and Army troops, who disappeared from the streets of central Bucharest and made no effort to protect the buildings. It gave rise to suggestions from some observers that the crowds were led by government provocateurs hoping to justify a tougher crackdown. The Defense Minister, General Victor Stanculescu, was out of the country, and his absence helped fuel rumors of a power struggle within the government. For whatever reason, the firemen in a station a block away from the police building let it burn for much of the evening before bringing out the hoses.

Just before dusk, Sofian and I hailed a driver in a passing car and asked him if he would take us to the television station, on the north side of town. The building, unlike the abandoned police headquarters, was ringed by several hundred soldiers and police. They in turn were surrounded by several hundred demonstrators and at least a thousand onlookers. A newscaster had just announced that programming might be interrupted (as it soon was), because demonstrators were invading the studios. In reality, as far as I could tell, the demonstrators hadn't entered the building at that point. As the demonstrators were shouting their usual anti-government slogans—"Down with Iliescu!" and "The only solution is another revolution!"—an open trailer truck crammed with men brandishing clubs and iron pipes pulled up in the driveway about thirty feet from me. Close to a hundred men hit the ground in a near-run, chanting "Il-i-es-cu! Il-i-es-cu!" Then they shouted "The workers are coming! The workers are coming!" and marched into the crowd. The demonstrators, panicking, retreated in a wave toward the trees and shrubs bordering the sidewalk, and tore off small tree branches to arm themselves against the club-swinging workers. As the two groups mingled, they traded insults and shoves. Then, within minutes, heads cracked and blood spilled as clusters from both sides lunged at each other. At that point, Sofian noticed a pack of the pro-government workers streaming toward the entrance of the television station. "I can't believe it! Look there!" he said. "It's amazing. They're letting those people into the building." The workers entered the building, apparently without resistance from the lines of police and military. From where we were standing, we could see the glassed-in catwalk between the two main television buildings, and could see one of the first men to enter the building stop right inside the catwalk and club anti-government people as they, too, began to enter the building. (The government later broadcast images of shattered studios.)

When I left the station, shortly after nine, ambulances were carrying away bloodied demonstrators, hundreds of curious people were streaming toward the compound, and television programming had resumed, just in time for the latest World Cup soccer match.

By nightfall, Iliescu had begun to broadcast the government version of the day's events, announcing, in a series of alarming communiqués, that Romania was facing an "organized attempt to overthrow the government through violent acts committed by Fascist extremists." What was more ominous, as the evening wore on he repeatedly summoned "all democratic forces" to "help in liquidating this Iron-Guardist rebellion."

Meanwhile, the military had stepped up its presence throughout the city, positioning three T-54 medium battle tanks in front of the Interior Ministry. Machine-gun fire rattled through the streets around the television station and the soot-blackened police headquarters, and platoons of soldiers and police tried to disperse several thousand noisy demonstrators, who were still breaking windows at the television station. Later that night, a rumor floated in from the North Station: "The miners are coming!" Most journalists felt it had to be a joke. Besides, the military's belated appearance seemed to be quelling the demonstrations, and the streets were quieting down.

On my way to bed, around 3:30 A.M., I drew back the curtain of my hotel room. The square was silent, fringed by the silhouettes of charred buses at the south end and guarded by about fifty soldiers lined up across the street. Within an hour, the soldiers withdrew. At the same time, I learned later, President Iliescu was welcoming five thousand miners armed with clubs and iron bars in front of the government headquarters, in Victory Square, and urging them to go to University Square and maintain order while the authorities cleared away the hulks of vehicles. In all, ten thousand had arrived on government trains from the Jiu Valley. Alec Russell, a correspondent for the London *Daily Telegraph*, later told me that they marched in with their headlamps on. "It was almost silent," he said, "except for the purring sound of their boots on the streets."

From my window the next morning I saw a stunning, frightening scene—another grim tableau out of a nineteenth-century lithograph. In the background were the faded, elegant buildings, in the foreground the miners in their baggy blue-gray work clothes.

I ran down to the lobby, and, one after another, colleagues burst through the door with accounts of violence. Thousands of miners were swarming through the rush-hour streets of central Bucharest, accosting anyone they suspected of being a critic of the government. If they weren't satisfied with the victim's identity papers, or if they found a leaflet from an opposition party in a pocket, one miner would hold the victim while three or four others bashed away with iron pipes, wooden clubs, and sledgehammers. I saw one man carrying an axe.

Stepping out on the sidewalk, I took care not to pull out my tape recorder or my notebook, for we had heard that the miners were seizing camera equipment and threatening to search the hotel room for journalists. Several clusters of miners, some with red carnations stuck in their antiquated helmets, were loitering by the doorway. Suddenly, they all dashed to the aid of another pack of miners, coming toward the hotel from across the lawn. The new arrivals' clubs were swinging, and in the midst of them a blood-soaked man was being dragged under the arms by two miners. They dropped him about two yards away from my feet and resumed the beating. The clubs made a thudding sound as they struck his back and thighs. As the miners delivered a final round of blows, a Dacia sedan pulled up. The miners opened its doors and shoved the victim into the back seat. Two miners accompanied him, one sitting in the open window and waving in triumph. As the car tore off, another took its place, and another pack of miners appeared out of nowhere, hauling and beating yet another man, and the gruesome scene was repeated.

I stood for about ten minutes on the edge of the square, watching the miners puff on cigarettes during a break, and finally, with Sofian, I approached a group of them. We chose a dark-eyed, heavyset man with stubble covering his broad cheeks, and I asked why he had come to Bucharest.

"I listened to the television communiqué of President Iliescu to the whole country," he said. "The communiqué said that hooligans were up to something very bad in Bucharest, so we miners came from the Jiu Valley."

Two other miners suddenly strode up and broke in. "Stop this now, lady! Cut this!" they barked.

"This is our problem, and it's none of your business," another newcomer said angrily. "So cut the talk now." Their voices were rising as they grew impatient.

The original miner I had been interviewing shrugged, and one of about twenty others, who were now pressing against us, glared at the small tape recorder I had ventured to pull out. "Is it still running?" he demanded.

I made an ostentatious show of pressing the "Off" button, and he and his friends warned that I'd better go away.

A huge woman with a foghorn voice broke in. I had noticed her standing with her little girl on the sidewalk cheering the miners. Now she screamed, "We want to clean this whole square of all the *golani!* We want to kill them all!"

While the miners bashed men, women, and even children, the square reverberated with pro-Iliescu slogans from cavalcades of local factory workers mobilized to march up to Victory Square. The sidewalks overflowed with Front supporters, who hailed the workers and applauded the miners, shouting "Kill him! Kill him!" as they beat up suspected opponents of the government. Farther north, on the boulevard, the cheering squads dispersed. There, on every block, people were crumpling amid a blur of miners. It all took place in silence, as terrified pedestrians streamed past, staring straight ahead, careful not to glance in the miners' direction.

THE beatings went on unabated all day Thursday and Friday. Almost immediately upon arriving in the square, I later learned, the miners had stormed the university. They raced down a spiral stone staircase to the students' club, dragged the Students' League president, Marian Munteanu, and his companions from their sleep, and beat them so severely that by late afternoon Munteanu lay in a hospital bed with a fractured skull, a broken arm, and a broken leg. Then they burst into the Institute of Architecture, hunted down students hiding on the top floor, beat them soundly, and trashed part of the building. Down the quiet street behind the Inter-Continental, the miners, assisted by both the military and the police, barged into a tattered old mansion serving as the 21st of December Association headquarters. They totally ransacked the place, stole files and address lists, and beat up and dragged off several members of the association. They left excrement on the floor. In the first hours of their search-and-destroy mission, the miners also ravaged the headquarters of the major opposition parties and forced opposition papers and the leading independent daily, *Romania Libera*, to shut down. They also trashed the home of the Peasants' Party's recent Presidential candidate, Ion Ratiu. When I got to Ratiu's house, in a lovely wooded residential neighborhood of Bucharest, I found him in his study, picking through a carton of broken glass as he stood two inches deep in papers that had been dumped from cabinets and drawers. His hair, a collar-length white mane, was dishevelled, and, for the first time in my memory, he was not wearing his usual crisp bow tie.

"I got word that the miners were coming, and managed to get out ten minutes before they arrived," he said. "This whole thing is completely stage-managed, like Kristallnacht. It's the same thing, only on a smaller scale. They let the miners loose on me and people like me in order to frighten us, so we won't fight them anymore and we'll only respect brutal force and authority. It tallies with the way the whole demonstration yesterday was made to appear the work of demonstrators—of the university students. That's not true. It was done by the Securitate, in order to provide an excuse for bringing in the miners and letting them loose on us, the leaders of the opposition."

Certainly the events seemed well choreographed by the government, the Army, and the Securitate. The miners, who are strangers to Bucharest, arrived at their destinations with addresses and photographs of the people they were supposed to attack. It also appears clear that not all the miners were miners—some were simply thugs; others were security police masquerading with blackened faces. According to Dan Neagu, of the 21st of December Association and one of their victims, the imposters were the ones who "really knew how to beat, so the beating would hurt." Neagu, whose back was a crosshatch of long, purplish-red welts, was among untold scores of people who got their most thorough working over in the halls of the government headquarters itself—from the "miners" and police as the Army looked on.

ON Friday, Prime Minister Roman held a press conference in a huge, ornate reception room on the second floor of the Foreign Ministry, where the government is headquartered. (Iliescu had been scheduled to speak, but he had cancelled his appearance, we learned later, in order to deliver a farewell-and-thank-you address to the miners.) Joining Roman was the Defense Minister, General Stanculescu now back in the country, and Doru Viorel Ursu, who had replaced the hated Chitac as Interior Minister the day before. The session began with a videotape compiled from footage shot by the state-run television.

The tape was a distortion of what we had all seen. The footage covered only the violence by the demonstrators on June 13th, omitting any scenes of the predawn police raid that triggered it. It zoomed in on the syringes and "drugs" used by the hunger strikers. The attack on the television station was portrayed as an all-out assault by the protesters, omitting the crucial episode of the arrival, shortly after eight, of the truckload of pro-government workers, armed with heavy clubs and iron bars. Nor were there any scenes of the belated military intervention during the night of June 13th-14th, with the shooting to disperse the crowds. And, most surreal, there were no images of the miners marauding through the streets. As I watched the tape, I felt the full impact of what the demonstrators in University Square had been driving at when they harped so long on the need for "the truth."

Roman opened by blasting the press for not quoting the President's communiqués, and then stated that he was ready to assume full responsibility for all that had taken place. According to Roman, the people who spearheaded the violence on June 13th were Bucharest's "profiteers, black-marketeers, and heads of prostitution rings," and their "combat and fighting manner clearly showed organization" and an "Iron-Guardist nature." He denied that the miners had been called in by the government, though he did admit that the President's television statement had had an effect. In any case, he said, the miners' reaction was "reasonable," given the "barbarous things" that they had seen on television. "There were unpleasant moments," he conceded, "when certain citizens were molested without reason—something that we publicly deplore and consider wrong." By implication, other citizens were molested with reason.

With the phrase "unpleasant moments" echoing in my mind, I hitched a ride back to the Inter-Continental with a group of journalists from Agence France Presse. Roman had just told us that the miners were now leaving for the Jiu Valley, but we had some frightening moments as our car was nearly swamped by two separate mobs, clubs in the air, storming in different directions. Just outside the hotel's revolving door was another rabid crowd, of at least a hundred miners, threatening to push their way up to the rooms to attack foreign journalists who had been photographing their exploits from the balconies facing the square. "We're going to get them!" one of the miners bellowed, as the nervous hotel staff struggled to keep them at bay, and another yelled, "We'll devour everyone in Bucharest!" Our party slipped as discreetly as possible past the crowd and headed upstairs.

I went into the office of the Prime Minister's official spokesman, Christian Unteanu, which happened to be on the hotel's second floor, to see how he would reconcile Roman's assurances that the miners were on their way home with the scenes I had just witnessed. Unteanu is an archetype of the younger Ceausescu generation—men and women, now around forty, who were educated in the nineteen-sixties and early seventies and today see a future of power and privilege. He was the chief of the Communist Youth group in one of Bucharest's élite secondary schools, and until Ceausescu's fall he worked for national television.

Unteanu had taken the whole miner affair in stride. He had been down in the hotel lobby early on the morning of their arrival, and later, according to eyewitnesses, had received office equipment pillaged from opposition headquarters which the miners brought to the hotel. On Friday morning, the second day of the miners' rampage, he had gone on record, saying, "The situation is normal." When he was asked whether the government considered it normal to beat up women and children with the police looking on, he had answered, "No comment."

Now, as I entered Unteanu's office, he was slouched in his high-backed chair, talking on the phone. He seemed nervous. My interpreter, Corin, whispered, "He's saying to someone that it seems the miners are trying to chase the foreign journalists into the hotel."

When Unteanu hung up, I asked if he had any official comment from the government, in view of the fact that the Prime Minister had just affirmed that the miners were on their way out of town.

He looked up and said coolly, "The miners will not enter the hotel."

I returned to my room just as more buses were pulling up in the square, disgorging several hundred miners in the direction of the university and the Institute of Architecture. They hesitated when they reached the fountain in front of the Institute of Architecture. The pace of their attacks seemed to be slowing.

Corin was gazing at the television, which was broadcasting excerpts from Iliescu's thank-you speech to the miners. "It's such wooden language," he said. "The most wooden I've heard him use yet. It's just like Ceausescu." Then he translated.

"Dear miners," the President began. "I again thank you very much for your feelings of solidarity and for everything you have done these past days, and in general for your attitude of high civic awareness." He elaborated on the official reconstruction of the incidents that had occurred on June 13th, calling them "an attempted coup by a force of extremist, rightist elements, a coup of Iron-Guardist and Fascist character," instigated from the outside by "joint action of right-wing forces" across Eastern Europe. Using the same logic, he went on to describe the pro-democracy demonstration in University Square as a function of these foreign subversives, who found "malcontent or parasitic elements" of Romanian society, and fed them, paid them, and drugged them, in order to "put them in a state of euphoria and fanaticism for such moments." As for Iliescu's position on the stinging condemnations from the governments of the United States and Great Britain, among others, he assured the miners that he rejected all accusations of violence by the miners against "peaceful citizens and the party headquarters." And, finally, to a resounding chorus of cheers—"Uraa! Uraa!"—Iliescu thanked the miners on behalf of the Bucharest population for everything they had done and urged them to "keep in check the degenerate, déclassé, and fanatical elements who want to destabilize the country."

THE first trainload of miners left Bucharest about seven o'clock that evening. The rest departed in three or four trains during the night, but not before a band of some two hundred avenging Gypsies set out for the North Station with clubs and knives, ready to do battle with them for beating up residents and flattening the illegal moonshine markets in as many as six Gypsy neighborhoods. The police, recognizing the potential for a bloody ethnic conflict, intercepted them en route and fired shots in the air to send them back.

Ironically, it was a relief to look outside my window on Saturday and see a thin line of police edging the square. A tentative calm had settled over Bucharest as steady rain and lingering fear kept the usual Saturday strollers off the streets. I spent the weekend trying to find out who had gone into hiding and who had been arrested. By the end of the weekend, the government announced that it had detained over a thousand people, and that some of the protesters who had been hauled off to police stations by the miners were being released. A nineteen-year-old student named Victor Roncea told me that the police wore them down by saying that Marian Munteanu was dead, in order to get them to sign confessions blaming their leader for inciting the violence.

And yet, insane as it seemed, on Sunday evening and Monday morning, as the skies cleared, the demonstrators were back in University Square, again blocking traffic as they milled about. Many faces were familiar to me from the spring occupation, and I watched as they laughed and embraced people they thought had been detained. One young couple I talked to said they had come out simply to get information about what was happening, because since Thursday the only papers for sale had been those that supported the Front. Anyone living beyond a three-mile radius of University Square who did not have access to a short-wave radio or to Hungarian or Yugoslavian TV would have missed the rampage of the miners completely.

On Monday afternoon, the Students' League gave a wrenching press conference, announcing that Marian Munteanu had been taken from his hospital bed by plainclothes police that day. His exact whereabouts were unknown; his wife and family were distraught. As the League's vice-president, Mihai Gheorghiu, spoke, he was flanked by three rows of young colleagues, dazed and sullen, with black eyes and bandaged heads, shaven scalps and sutured head wounds. They seemed shell-shocked.

Afterward, in the League's crowded office, Gheorghiu, a dark, bearded literature student, echoed the growing view here—that the Securitate, sometimes disguised as miners, played a central role in last week's event. "Mr. Iliescu spoke about Fascists, Fascists, Fascists, Iron-Guard Legionnaires," he said. "It was paranoia. It was exactly like Ceausescu. It's the Securitate that manages all these screenplays of violence and crimes. It's a sort of picture of horror, life in this country."

Gheorghiu acknowledged that the students and intellectuals face daunting problems having to do with the conflict not only between classes but between the old generation and the new. They see among their elders men and women who spent their lives building and defending—or, at least, complying with, in order to keep their privileges—a

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system that could be heartless. For two decades, women suspected of attempting to abort an unwanted pregnancy were left to bleed to death in emergency rooms if they refused to confess. Tens of thousands of unwanted infants were dumped into mammoth orphanages and "incurable" homes. And because the nation's most powerful physicians did nothing to halt the spread of AIDS through a tainted blood supply, ten per cent of the eight thousand orphans under the age of three who have been tested are infected. The key figure in that cover-up, Dr. Ludovic Paun, the head of the Center for the Study of Infectious Diseases, has not been dismissed.

"We need leaders who are moral men," Gheorghiu went on. "True men, sincere men, who act in a sincere way, in a right way."

"Do you know many people who fit that description?" I asked.

"Some. But they're students, they're young, they're at the very beginning."

IT is certain that the *golani* demonstrations of the spring have given impetus to an irreversible process; it is also certain that Romania is hurtling toward a convulsive period of change. Last week's debacle has no doubt strained the Front's tangled alliances with the military and the old security apparatus which shepherded it through Ceausescu's overthrow; in addition, relations within the Front itself have grown brittle and could crack apart. Indeed, some political experts here say that in the coming turmoil—economic forecasts are extremely grim, and the risk of civil and ethnic conflict is high—the military could be the only institution capable of holding things together. For the moment, the opposition appears crushed, and with the marked resurgence of the Securitate it will be difficult to rebuild. But the 21st of December's Sandu Nancu and Tania Siperco, whose papers and office equipment are in ruins, say they plan to plow ahead.

There has been no public apology for the miners' assault, which, according to the authorities, brought the number of people treated for injuries up from ninety-three, on Wednesday, to more than five hundred by the week's end. More than a hundred people were hospitalized, and six were killed—three by bullet wounds on Wednesday night. Nor has there been any response to the barrage of criticism from nearly all the major Western nations and from Poland's Lech Walesa. The United States boycotted Iliescu's inauguration, on the 20th of June, and withheld the granting of most-favored-nation trade status. Iliescu dropped the labels "Fascist" and "Iron Guard" from his inaugural address, and said that he deplored the "excesses," without specifying whose. He was otherwise unrepentant. While an investigation into the week's incidents is planned, there is no mention of bringing any of the miners to justice. And yet everyone I have talked to—even people who are swathed in bandages—agrees that the affair has not tarnished Iliescu's popularity.

Today at noon, I went up to attend the six-month memorial service for the uprising at the Church of the Patriarchy, an ornate Romanian-Orthodox church up on the hill in the center of town. The bells pealed for the dead, but there was little acknowledgment of the moment in the streets. Outside the church I encountered a group of middle-aged women in kerchiefs leaving the service. Shortly before, Iliescu had made an appearance, and Liliana Pojiţa, in her fifties, was one of about a hundred women who had crowded around to hug him. "We didn't elect Iliescu for *dollars*," she told me. "We're very happy with him, and we're very bothered that others come from abroad to bring democracy to us and destroy the quietness."

Across the stone courtyard I met a twenty-three-year-old auto mechanic named Chris. "Have you been to the heroes' cemetery?" he asked, referring to a stark new graveyard across town where the victims of December are buried in row after row. "Have you seen the ages on the crosses? They're all my age." Becoming agitated, he went on, "Iliescu's responsible for this. While people were being killed in the streets, he was out talking on the balcony of the Central Committee, and there's not even a scratch on the building. The rest of the buildings around it look as if they'd been bombed." Sweat was pouring from his face as the sun burned through the haze. "We didn't fight in December to have the Communists again," he said, looking away and then abruptly turning back to me. "A friend of mine died—had his brains blown out. For what?"

—Kathleen Hunt

THE THEATRE

Spaghetti Western

A. J. ANTOON'S yippee-eye-ay version of "The Taming of the Shrew," starring Tracey Ullman and Morgan Freeman as Kate and Petruchio, is that familiar and negligible thing—an alfresco production that's sort of stupid but sort of fun, sort of pointless but sort of pleasant, sort of irritating but sort of entertaining, and sort of not quite really Shakespeare but who cares so long as it doesn't rain. Like most Central Park productions, this one consists mostly of shtick, which here means silly voices. Every variety of regional American accent is employed: Southern, Western, Southwestern, Midwestern—no matter whether it's consistent or recognizable, just so it's broad. For the first five or ten minutes, the combination of exaggeration and eclecticism in the way people speak, superimposed on the Elizabethan text, makes the lines unintelligible. But even after your ear becomes adjusted to the various dialects, the words remain secondary; you laugh at lines because of how they're being uttered, not because of what they mean.

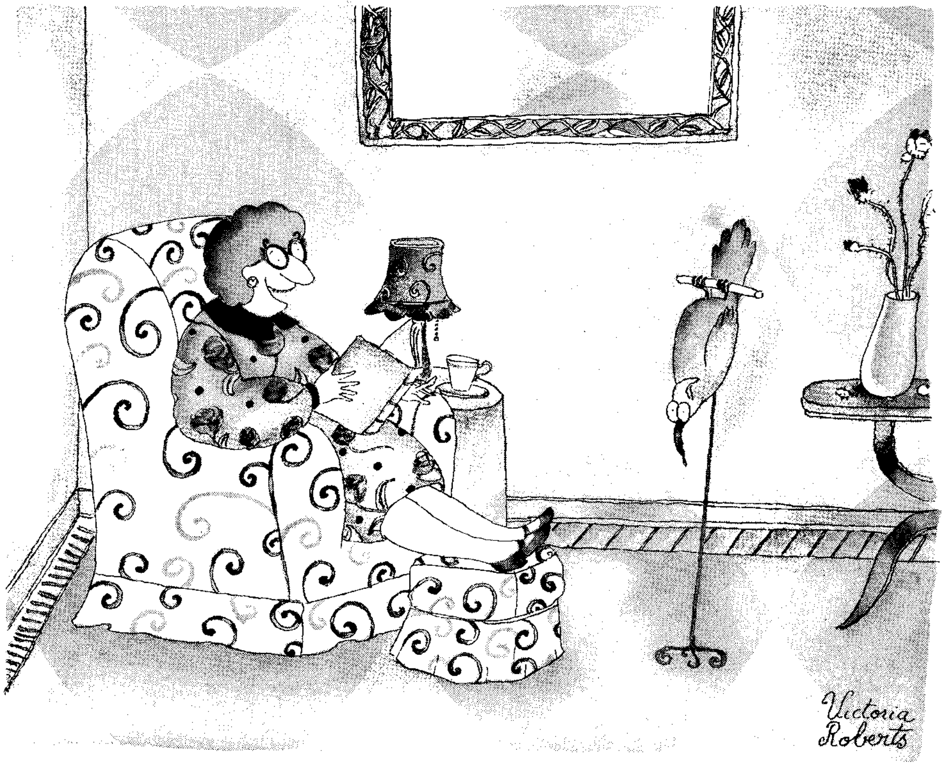
In a way, it's too bad that Antoon had to muck up the production with so much philological business: he could have allowed characters to speak normally and left it to John Lee Beatty's set and Claude White's music to establish the Western setting—and the setting isn't such a bad idea. "The Taming of the Shrew" isn't a play to be made or marred by the presence of a wagon wheel or a horse trough. It isn't the sort of play where you wait and wait for a particular beloved scene or speech, and if it isn't uttered or performed correctly the meaning of the experience is destroyed. There is no right or wrong way to perform Kate or Petruchio, and no right or wrong setting: there are only varieties and gradations of shrewishness and bullying. We wait to find out how a particular speech or scene will be interpreted—the capitulation scene, or the duty-of-women speech. Will it be played in irony or in earnest? And how will they bring it off?

Antoon's production reduces the issue between Kate and Petruchio to one of dire simplicity. Miss Ullman's Kate is a cross between Joe Cocker and Calamity Jane. She spits, picks her teeth, swaggers, downs shots of whiskey, shouts, brawls, and roars. She's cross and mean and grouchy—like an angry, maladjusted child. The whole concept of "shrewishness" is reduced to bad behavior. The pièce de résistance is a wild temper tantrum she throws, halfway to being an epileptic fit, after which she seems drained or purged or just plain exhausted. It's funny, because everything Miss Ullman does is funny, but then Mr. Freeman imitates it, thereby proving the not very interesting proposition that unattractive behavior is unattractive.

Again, it's too bad that Antoon couldn't do better than this schoolroom interpretation—that Petruchio "tames" Kate by showing her what she looks like. Mr. Freeman makes a delightful shrew tamer; moreover, the idea of a black Petruchio has real possibilities. But although Mr. Freeman and Miss Ullman are mugging on the very highest plane, they are still mugging. And in spite of the wealth of truly talented actors in the cast—among them Robert Joy (whose Tranio is all speech mannerisms), Helen Hunt (who makes an amusing Bianca and does the best at delivering Shakespeare in a Midwestern twang), Tom Mardirosian (as Hortensio), and Graham Winton (whose Lucentio gets lost in a Southern drawl)—there isn't any real acting going on. Consequently, nothing in the production is as much fun to watch as it could be. It isn't until the last scene—when we find that Kate has put off her childish characteristics but retained her basic lack of femininity—that the play gets interesting, and by then it's time to go home.

This production has the look and feel of something with Broadway aspirations: the set—a wall of barn siding with sliding platforms that wheel themselves out to provide a saloon bar or banquet table, and a painted mural of wild horses that appear and disappear depending on what kind of light Peter Kaczorowski throws on them—is quite beautiful, and more ingenious than any I've seen at the Delacorte in a number of years. The music, too, is more sophisticated than usual. With such an ace cast, and with stars like Miss Ullman and Mr. Freeman in the company, it's easy to imagine that Joe Papp mounted this production in the hope of moving it. But I don't think it would transfer successfully. The problem is really Antoon: he's fine for a fine summer evening, but I doubt that he would play very well on Broadway.

—MIMI KRAMER



"Don't we like the Brothers Grimm anymore?"

DANCING

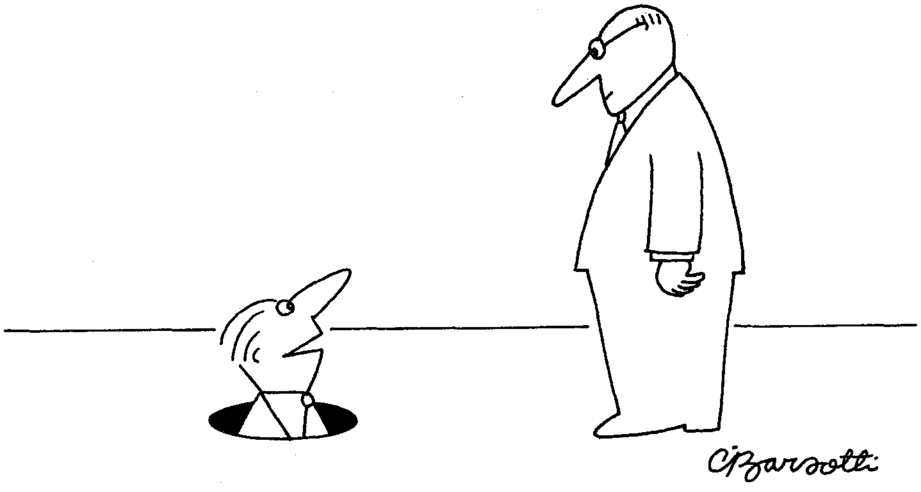
Multicultural Theatre

THERE used to be only one place a nondancer could learn about dance—the theatre. Now there's the college classroom, too: at its best, a forum for the lively discussion of things seen and sensed in the theatre; at its worst, a refuge for theatrephobes and intellectual diddlers, and a source of Newspeak. The latest buzzword is "multiculturalism"—the term educators have been using to define the vogue in curriculum reform. In dance circles, multiculturalism means the political advocacy of other than Western (or non-"Eurocentric") forms of dance. Those of us who are educated in the theatre may well wonder what there is to be political about. Multiculturalism exists and has always existed in American dance; there is scarcely an American choreographer of note who has not been influenced both by the pluralism of our society and by the way dance just naturally soaks it up. Pinning a label on a simple phenomenon like that is something only an academic would want to do. And only political academics would want to isolate the elements of pluralism in such a way as to aggrandize some and stigmatize others.

The multiculturalists who cite recent trends in immigration have a case. There may be a need to promote the accessibility of Asian, Hispanic, and African dance companies, many of which lead a marginal life, with few bookings. But the dance forms themselves are hardly inaccessible—they're part of every dance tradition the West knows. At their purest (assuming that one can find village and street festivals that are uninfected by television and tourism), they still speak a rhythmic language intelligible to all who love dance. To argue otherwise fits in with certain divisive notions of culture popular in the universities; it also fits in with theories of curriculum reform.

But the discussion of multiculturalism among dance people has a peculiar urgency. What the academic partisans of Asian and Hispanic and African dance are really telling us is that ballet is in decline and the creative impetus in modern dance has finally petered out; therefore, we'd better pay attention to these other styles or we have no dance to talk and write about. The key word is "other" (it's another buzzword); the assumption is that these styles lie outside the mainstream and are kept there by mainstream prejudice. And what the pols want (and, given their weight in academic quarters, seem certain to get) is the creation of special-interest groups that need special-interest, academically fostered insights in order to be understood.

The Dance Critics Association, which often serves as an academic sounding board, has announced a conference devoted to "Critical Imperatives in World Dance," to be held later this summer in Los Angeles. At the same time, the Los Angeles Festival will offer dance presentations consisting of—according to the D.C.A. flyer —"ensembles from the Pacific Islands, Asia, Australia, Central and South America, Mexico and Indonesia, as well as performances by distinguished American artists." Presumably, the flyer means United States-based or United States-bred artists. In any case, one of the distinguished ones was scheduled to be Mark Morris, whose Brussels-based company has just completed its annual summer engagements in this country. Morris was dropped when the festival finances got too tight. Los Angeles will miss seeing what the festival could have taken pride in sponsoring as a genuine expression of world dance. The dancers Morris employs are of every color and physical description, and are cast without regard to race, rank, or sex. The choreography is a blend of styles Western and Eastern. Though it may not advertise itself this way, the company is, in fact, a multicultural microcosm. I saw it in Boston, in Brooklyn, and at Jacob's Pillow. As a dance spectacle, it seemed to have matured over the past year. I was fascinated not only by its abundance and variety but by its elegant distillation, its emphasis on *this* world in *this* grain of sand. It was what every great dance company—ethnic, classical, or modern—has always been: a vision of the universe and the individual's place in it.



"Sir, all the junior executives join me in thanking you for sending down the cookies."

Morris's company stresses the individual, though, in ways that other companies don't. Men and women make powerful impressions, but they hardly ever do so together, or in relation to one another, or by themselves in relation to the group. Though partners exist in Morris's universe, their existence is circumscribed and qualified by the group; they step out of a human panorama and fall back into it without asserting themselves for more than a few seconds as a unit. I'm describing a general tendency, not a hard-and-fast rule. But certainly none of the pieces I saw this summer included the pas de deux as a preferred form, even when the form could have been mandated by the subject, and even when it might have been given single-sex treatment. (That possibility existed, as it always does, on Morris's stage, but only as a possibility.)

In his version of Purcell's "Dido and Aeneas" (performed in Brooklyn at the Majestic Theatre), the lovers do not make love; the ceremonial nature of the proceedings all but precludes it, and anyway the more important duo is Dido and the Sorceress, both of whom are danced by Morris, in an unnervingly suggestive double portrait. Aeneas, resplendently portrayed in a stylized “still” performance by Guillermo Resto, is really the fulcrum of Dido's passion, the means by which she meets her destiny in death. In his setting of Brahms' “Liebeslieder Walzer” (presented by Dance Umbrella in Boston) Morris avoids the pas-de-deux form almost entirely. The music, of course, is the basis of one of the great Balanchine ballets, in which the vast majority of the dances are danced by couples, and monogamous couples at that. Morris's version of the “Love-Song Waltzes” (like Balanchine, he has choreographed both books, for a total of thirty-three dances) involves trios and quartets more than duets. Trios re-form themselves into couples, then back into trios. Couples “make love” two pairs at a time and freely interchange partners—at least, they do in that half of the ballet which was choreographed in 1982. The other half, which Morris made last year, is another story.

In his dances Morris often tells us what he thinks of another artist's work, judging it against his own view of the world. The intensity of Balanchine and his vision of deepening erotic mystery are things that Morris doesn't even try for. Instead of romantic poetry he composes a kind of stumblebum ode to adolescence, all crude energy and confusion. He builds dances out of ultra-simple “folk” movement, with rough edges. The beauty of the art songs flows around and through the movement in emotional counterpoint. For some reason, Morris choreographed the second set of Brahms' song cycle first, and it was presented first on the Boston program. It opens with a single dancer, the robust, big-boned Ruth Davidson, rushing forward, springing into an air turn, and landing with a bang in second position. That image turns out to characterize the piece, both its orgiastic spirit (love as appetite, as the life force) and its tragic spirit, seen in the eventual loss of the eager-hearted solitary ones, trampled in the crowd.

The sequel, Brahms' (and Balanchine's) prequel, is not only more restrained; it's more graceful. The clodhopping movement style is pared down, and Morris has more control; he no longer lustily bites off more music than he can chew or gets unwanted laughs. As in the Balanchine version, the tone of the dancing is more recreational, with less complicated feelings. The sexual confusion continues, the partners yearning toward and away from each other at the same time. But the only actual face-to-face dancing is the ballroom waltz. The odd-man-out theme dwindles to one scene of a boy trying to escape from his (family?) circle and being gently but insistently restrained until he is finally given up.

In the last dance, Keith Sabado, whom Morris often uses symbolically, waltzes the other dancers one by one off the stage, then walks off himself.

In the Balanchine Part One, when the couples leave the stage one by one they are clearly on their way to bed, to return transfigured in Part Two. The way Morris clears the stage of couples—the finality of it—tells us that this is really the end of the ballet; there's no going on, no reversing the parts back to Brahms' original order. Read as a commentary on contemporary sexual realities, the confinement, the openly social tone, the new spareness in the dance style are poignant and yet bracing in their awareness. We feel the sensitivity of Morris's response to the AIDS plague, and his hardheadedness, too. Opening with a bang, he has done all he can to keep from ending with a whimper.

At Jacob's Pillow, there was another new piece about social manners, the hilarious, satirically coarse-grained “Going Away Party.” Three couples, and they are unmistakably couples, have a heavy Saturday-night date to the music of Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys—eight selections in all, including the title number, “Yearning,” “My Shoes Keep Walking Back to You,” “Milk Cow Blues,” and “When You Leave Amarillo, Turn Out the Lights.” Morris makes broad jokes, such as having the men constantly go upstage to pee, but he doesn't vulgarize his dance idiom—if anything, it's prettier and dancier than the idiom of the Brahms pieces. It's also exactly suited to the music, not ironically opposed, as in the Brahms. Morris uses this idiom to portray an earlier America and characters who are slightly older and who live, somewhat cynically, by convention—brash, sexually aggressive kids. In the world of “Going Away Party,” love is only something you hear about in

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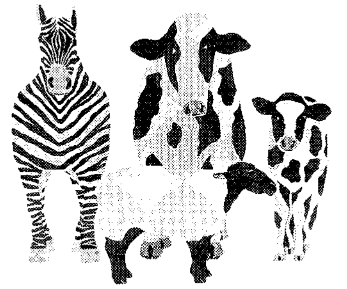

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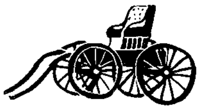
songs. I have carried away a memory of that world made of the repeated parallel lunges on the opening phrase of "Yearning (Just for You)." Side by side, a man and a woman twice lunge forward on one foot, with heads bent and arms swinging, as if they were taking low, hungry bites out of the air. They move, callously, on the downbeat. These are tough gals and horny guys, sure of getting what they want from each other. Meanwhile, Morris as the loner in their midst, the good-ole-boy bachelor host of the party, tries—literally—to keep his footing. (When he slumps to the floor, the others walk right over him—an incident repeated from "New Love-Song Waltzes.") Wearing a silver spangled Western outfit, a ponytail, and a hearty grin, Morris is both the central and the most peripheral figure in the piece. We get the feeling that he's the soft-touch big brother and the dreamer and the goat, but, like the others, he keeps fading back into the group life, with its group values. He may be the most underprivileged of the characters that Morris has invented for himself to perform; in his solo, he even looks as if he isn't much of a dancer. And yet without him the whole piece would lack focus and definition.

As a picture of cowtown dating rituals, "Going Away Party" may be a little too wicked, especially to the women, who thump the men's heads to keep them in line. We see how the sexes use each other, but (and here is Morris's superiority as a choreographer and a social observer) we also see their fun, and it really isn't as simple as it looked at first. When Morris brings the dancers out in solos, we see the gleaming sexual energy that has charged them up for this big night. And when the Texas Playboys sing about women as "milk cows" Morris lets the scathing lyric stand without comment; it explains a lot about cowtown girls.

Morris had a good season as a performer. He also appeared in "Tamil Film Songs in Stereo," at the Pillow, and a mime solo, "Ten Suggestions," in Boston. In the ineffable "Tamil Film Songs," Morris lifts a singing lesson from the soundtrack of an Indian movie musical and interprets it as a dance lesson that a foppish pedant administers to a quaking pupil (Penny Hutchinson). The lesson gets hung up on an absurdly complex movement phrase, which Morris has to demonstrate over and over, and the way he does it makes the audience weak with joy, beginning with the fop's mincingly precise dictation of the phrase. His imperial anger at having to repeat it to the little fluffball doesn't die down, it just becomes a frame for transitions: covert pleasure in his own silky execution gives way to sheer self-gratification, with the now impossibly magisterial phrase unrolling as if by itself and the pupil all but forgotten. First choreographed in 1983, "Tamil Film Songs in Stereo" remains the funniest comic turn in dance today. The epilogue—master and pupil reconciled in the rosy glow of her recital, for which he has reserved a large and dearly cherished pink tutu—is as fine in its way as the lesson itself. (The piece is billed as "The 'Tamil Film Songs in Stereo' Pas de Deux," but the title doesn't fool us any more than it does the winsome and resourceful Hutchinson.)

"Ten Suggestions" is little charades in which Morris appears in pink silk pajamas and amuses himself with, in turn, a hoop, a chair, a hat, and a pair of scissors. His musical timing is pointedly mickey-mousy (the music is Tcherepnin's "Ten Bagatelles"), with punch lines delivered smack on the beat. This is the kind of performance piece that the performer blows up around himself like an inner tube. Though Morris did not fall prey to improvisation, that temptation clearly exists in the material. "Ten Suggestions" is an enjoyably inconsequential excursion into, and possibly a spoof on, mime—the depressed-Pierrot school of street meem.

Another of Morris's favorite themes is coexisting opposites. His ecstatic doubling of the roles of Dido and her Nemesis in Purcell's opera was not female impersonation but a representation of the duplicitous forces that lie within the heart of Dido and drive her to her doom. The basis for the dual characterization may have been a decision to create a split personality in dance terms, with the Queen as the adagio and the Sorceress as the allegro half of one character. But the dignified Dido and the daft, malignant Sorceress are not really equals. The Sorceress and her band are schoolgirls, and they dance to obstreperous schoolgirl music. (Literally schoolgirl; Purcell composed the opera for performance by the ladies' seminary that had commissioned it.) Watching Morris writhing and squatting and knuckling his eyes in derision made me think that the monster was not Dido's alter ego but her child, spawn of the love she bore Aeneas, and the embodiment of her pent-up passion for self-annihilation. Morris's "Dido" is a disturbing work; beneath the folly and the grandeur of it lie reverberant intimations of sadomasochism. Its seed is "One Charming Night," which Morris choreographed a few years ago to Purcell hymns. The subject was the seduction of a virgin by a vampire. Morris played the vampire, and his slow, insinuating dance with Teri Weksler was a pas de deux in every sense. For a vampire's victim, love and death are one and the same, and love and death exert equal claims on Dido: that is her tragedy. Aeneas brings about her destruction, but the force behind him is the diabolical "child" that she has created with him in her own image.



Only Morris, or the Martha Graham of forty years ago, would have conceived such an idea or had the courage to present it so dispassionately. The production, in fact, reminds me of "Clytemnestra," with its clean design and echoes of archaic theatre. The choruses of lascivious witches and drunken sailors are operatic conventions, pointing up the domestic tragedy. Sponsored by the Brooklyn Academy at the Majestic, Morris and his company had excellent support from the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and the Concert Chorale of New York, conducted by Nicholas McGegan. Judith Malafronte sang Dido and the Sorceress with energy.

Mark Morris was born in Seattle. There and in another port city, New York, he found teachers of dance in the various forms that influence his choreography: flamenco at first, then Balkan, Israeli, and Russian folk dance. Javanese and Hindu dance inform the court scenes in "Dido"; the mime portions make liberal use of the deaf-mute vocabulary of signs. Morris speaks so many languages that it comes as a surprise when, from time to time, he creates a work that has no trace of an accent—that is just "pure" movement. In between the two sets of Brahms lieder in Boston came "Behemoth," as stark a work as Morris has yet conceived, heightened by being danced in silence. Morris without music is still a musical Morris, however. The thirty-four minutes and ten sections of "Behemoth" are concisely executed in suite form, with blackouts. One thinks of the Jerome Robbins of "Moves." All the steps are organically related. The dynamic range is comfortingly wide, with speeds that go from headlong runs down to nothing, to absolute motionlessness. One thinks of the darker side of Cunningham. There is even sound: handclapping, the beating of limbs on the floor. It is the sound of the void.

"Behemoth," named for its unusual length and weight (fifteen dancers), is about the individual and the group. But the story it tells is elusive. The dancers' movements are integrated but unresolved, assembled in such a way as to keep us seeking, guessing, dreading their outcome. As "Behemoth" unfolds, the sense of a crushing arbitrary force develops. People aid but don't see each other. Unseeingly, they catch each other's hands. Stage space is unstable, divided in radical ways: oddly angled floor patterns, a bit of activity far downstage or over against the wings, a huge mass of people covering the stage, draining it, then returning while one or two stationary soloists labor. The lights frequently go out at a peak of tension; then they come on, and the scene, though changed, is still at that peak.

The tragic core of the piece is, I think, not dramatic so much as it is sensuous. To follow the action is to experience something like a new method of sensitization; you're off balance, hanging in there. "Behemoth" is new in what it is willing to expose of human suffering without offering a collateral emotion for it. Behind these images of disaster is a kind of cogent sympathy, the weightlessness of conviction in the void, and that's *all*. It's as if a new range of feeling had come into the world just in time for Morris to explore it.

The diversity of Mark Morris is a legend. But where he gets it all we'll never really know. In him a gift of provenance and a gift of expression are indistinguishable. All we can say is that he's a true dance artist. In dance, high art has always needed to be nourished by folk art, and folk art has always needed the mediation of the theatre. Without the theatre, dance isn't a medium; it's the preserve of anthropologists, not of artists. —ARLENE CROCE

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BOOKS

BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

The Door, by Georges Simenon, translated from the French by Daphne Woodward (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; $18.95). Bernard Foy, a young Parisian, happily married and with a good job as a mechanic, goes off to war in 1939, and comes home having lost both hands to a land mine. We meet him twenty years later, still happily married, but now it is his wife who goes out to work, while he stays home and does the shopping and cooking, using hooks for hands. Little by little over the years, he has become obsessed with the thought that her professed love for him is a pretense. How could she really care for such a maimed and helpless man? Foy's thoughts come to center on a man in an apartment below, a victim of polio who is confined to a wheelchair and to whom his wife occasionally brings a message or a parcel. Obsessional jealousy was one of Simenon's most powerful obsessions, and in this new (to us) novel he examines its lethal nature with agonizing perception and detail.

I for Isobel, by Amy Witting (Penguin; $6.95, paper). Isobel Callaghan, the heroine of this wonderful story from Australia, suffers a miserable childhood and a deprived adolescence before discovering that she is a writer. Told in self-contained, episodic chapters, the story covers the ten years from Isobel's ninth birthday to the aftermath of one of her many one-night stands. Her mother denies Isobel presents but demands declarations of love from her, and despises Isobel's good behavior. She dies, but Isobel is sprung only to a drudging secretarial job and a perverse relationship with the landlady of her boarding house. When she falls in with an arty crowd who quote Auden over lunch, she appears to have found her potential salvation, but Isobel is not so easily solved or saved. She finds herself making anonymous phone calls to strangers in which she spews out her hate, and sleeping around because "you like to join the human race on the only level you can manage." Witting is comparable to Jean Rhys in this tale of a starved life, but she has more starch, or vinegar. The effect is bracing.

Tehanu: The Last Book of Earthsea, by Ursula K. LeGuin (Atheneum; $15.95). Perhaps the last account of LeGuin's kingdom of islands where wizards transform themselves into falcons, and dragons in flight fill the air with "the stink of burning." But now brigands proliferate, the old ways are forgotten, and magic seems to be passing out of the world. Tenar, once a woman of great power, then an ordinary farmer's widow, finds her life again transformed when her old companion Ged reappears, half-destroyed with sickness and grief. She also adopts Therru, a child who was raped, then pushed into a fire and left to die by her parents. Tenar's increasingly difficult struggle to protect those she loves from danger calls up all her former selves, throwing her entire world—with its definitions of public and domestic, male and female, darkness and light—into question. LeGuin has always challenged assumptions about sex and politics in her science fiction, but her fantasy has followed more closely the conventions of Tolkien and Lewis. Here, however, like her heroine the author reëxamines the tenets of her world, disappointing some expectations while cultivating others. It seems unthinkable that LeGuin would now abandon this world so newly rich with possibility.

GENERAL

The Politics of Rich and Poor, by Kevin Phillips (Random House; $19.95). The author of "The Emerging Republican Majority," which served as a guide for the victorious Republicans in 1968, has designed a road map for the Democrats. Mr. Phillips demonstrates that the Republicans have increased the concentration of wealth among the richest Americans and deprivation among the poorest; enriched the two coasts while impoverishing the heartland; and diminished the real income of the middle class. He points out that Republican ideologists genuinely believed these policies would stimulate economic growth, and did not foresee the irresponsible speculation for which we must all pay. He also compares the Reagan Administration with earlier eras in which Republicans redistributed the nation's wealth upward. Mr. Phillips is a political analyst, not a moralist, but he thinks that the voters are morally repelled by the "distortion of American wealth" and, hurting financially, are ready to respond to reformist or populist appeals.

Mother, May You Never See the Sights I Have Seen, by Warren Wilkinson (Harper & Row; $30). Mr. Wilkinson has taken the 1896 history of the Massachusetts regiment in which his great-great-grandfather served and, with copious quotation from the diaries and letters of the men and officers of the unit, expanded it into a superb book. We are with the troops almost day by day, battle by battle, bivouac by bivouac during Grant's Overland Campaign of 1864-65, from the Battle of the Wilderness to the Battle of Cold Harbor and the siege of Petersburg. The percentage of men killed or wounded in the Fifty-seventh was one of the highest of any Union regiment. An unusual appendage of the book is the regiment's complete roster—brief military histories of its more than a thousand officers and men. These, unlike the bland and flowery official regimental histories, are down-to-earth: they include service records and officers' comments, which range from "Good soldier" and "Good Man, Poor Soldier" to "Never in battle . . . RASCAL."

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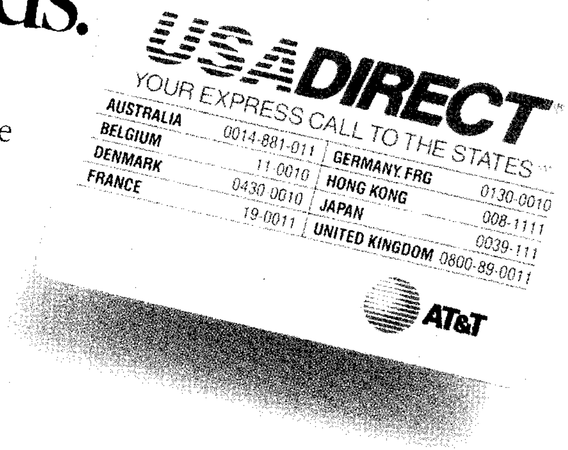
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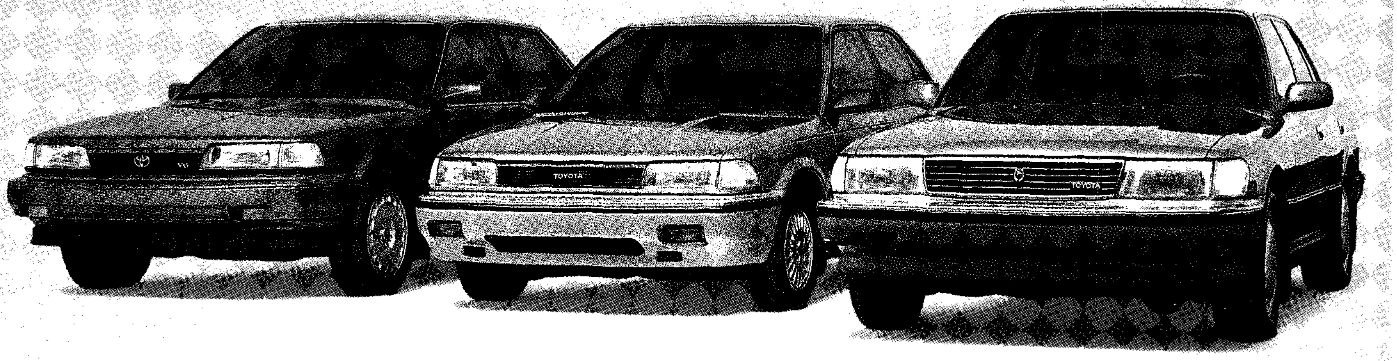

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